IN THE GARRET

by

CARL VAN VECHTEN

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In the Garret

BOOKS BY
CARL VAN VECHTEN

IN THE GARRET

THE MERRY-GO-ROUND

THE MUSIC OF SPAIN

INTERPRETERS AND INTERPRETATIONS

MUSIC AND BAD MANNERS

MUSIC AFTER THE GREAT WAR

In the Garret

Carl Van Vechten

"Memory is the mother of the Muses."
GEORGE MOORE

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MCMXX

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To Dorothy and Joseph Hergesheimer,
with warm affection, I send this book.

Tout est rien pour l'indifférence;
Un rien est tout pour l'amitié.

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Variations on a Theme
By Havelock Ellis

A poetic musician, a musical poet: two mighty good things, in their way! That is, if the musician be a musician, and the poet, a poet.

W. F. Apthorp.

Variations on a Theme

I

THE note-books of an artist always make interesting reading. These ideas, incidents, descriptions, these jottings down against the treachery of memory, which some day may fall into their proper places, often exhibit, when published, a more spontaneous grace than finished work. The later books of Arthur Symons are little more than note-books, impressions illuminatingly descriptive, shadows of ideas. Therein lies the secret of their enduring charm. Samuel Butler's "Note-Book," which has been published, is a treasure house of thought and wisdom. One day it occurred to Havelock Ellis that he had made more notes than he could ever conveniently find occasion to use and he filled a book with them, "Impressions and Comments," a delightfully stimulating volume, one of the best of this author, brimming over with pictures, ideas, and running commentary. Herein one may find discussions of Sir Richard Burton, Romanesque architecture, vegetarianism and vivisection, the significance of the body, William Blake, Jacobean furniture, ob-

scurity in style, Jules de Gaultier, crowd psychology, Bovarism, the symbolism of the apple, the Bayeux tapestry, flowers, the decline in the birth rate, and Granville Barker. Here is indeed a book which rewards any chance reader who flips open the pages. Picking it up for five minutes or an hour I have never failed to find enjoyment in it.

Recently I ran across the following passage, "I have often noticed . . . that when an artist in design, whether line or colour or clay, takes up a pen and writes, he generally writes well, sometimes even superbly well. Again and again it has happened that a man who has spent his life with a brush in his hand has beaten the best penmen at their own weapon. . . . It is hard indeed to think of any artist in design who has been a bad writer. The painter may never write, but when he writes, it would almost seem without an effort, he writes well. . . . And then, for contrast, think of that other art, which yet seems to be so much nearer to words; think of musicians!"

II

Why is it that musicians cannot write? I asked myself, for it needed only a half moment's reflection to convince me that Mr. Ellis was right, al-

though he does not attempt to answer the question. . . . Wagner is the first musician-writer to come to mind, for whether he could or not, Wagner certainly *did* write. He not only wrote the texts for his lyric dramas but also countless papers, manifestoes, explanations, arguments, etc., most of which have been carefully collected and which Mr. William Ashton Ellis has rendered to us in very faithful if not very distinguished English in eight volumes. Several volumes of letters and the posthumous "Life" make a formidable total. There are undoubtedly priceless facts, brilliant ideas, withal somewhat incoherent and contradictory, buried in this mass of matter. Biographers in general have found this material useful; music critics occasionally turn to it for corroboration or assistance; others leave it alone. Wagner, indeed, was always at a disadvantage when he wrote in words. Even the plays do not rise to very inspired heights without the music. Compare the direct and moving music of the love scene in the second act of *Tristan* with the metaphysical sentiments and sentences which flow from the lips of the guilty pair. His prose works, with their equivocal qualities, their ponderous and opaque phraseology, their individual and very bad German, would seemingly resist translation, but

Mr. Ellis has wrestled with the task, accomplished it, and even emerged to praise Wagner's style, praise which has found no echo. Of course the "Life" should have been a masterpiece and it is far from being a failure. Autobiography, even at its worst, is possibly the most enthralling form of literature. But compare the sparkling chapters of Benvenuto Cellini with the halting, obscure, and deliberately untruthful pages in Richard Wagner's account of his life and you will feel, somehow, that you have been cheated. And yet Wagner probably had more to tell than Cellini. The true story of the Wesendonck affair, the full details of his *ménage* with the virgin king, a glowing narrative of his capture of Cosima von Bülow, in themselves would have furnished the material for a remarkable tryptich in the style of George Moore's "Hail and Farewell." But he could not put it down. He did not know how to write. James Huneker, Catulle Mendès, a dozen writers have done it better, and yet *Wagner was there when these things happened.*

Gluck's famous preface to *Alceste* scarcely gives him claim to serious consideration as a writer. Mozart's letters, which are best perused in the volume of excerpts compiled by Friedrich Kerst, contain many passages of interest to the music

student, but they cannot be regarded as literature, nor is there any reason why they should be. Their style, the translator assures us, is "careless, contradictory, and sprawling." Beethoven certainly knew nothing of literary art. Schubert and Weber remained ignorant of it. Poor Chopin knew enough to stick to music. Paul De Musset replied to George Sand's "Elle et Lui" with another *roman à clef* but when "Lucrezia Floriani" appeared, Chopin contented himself with answering it on the piano. Mendelssohn's prose, exposed to us in his numerous letters, is as sentimental as his music and not so pretty.

Jean-Philippe Rameau, composer, and inventor of the system of the "fundamental bass," wrote several books, "Traité de l'Harmonie Réduite à ses Principes Naturels" (Paris, 1722), "Nouveau Système de Musique Théorique" (Paris, 1726), "Génération Harmonique" (Paris, 1737), and "Code de Musique Practique" (Paris, 1760). I have not attempted to read these books, but J. E. Matthew says of them, "It must be admitted that the style of Rameau is greatly wanting in clearness, so that some resolution is called for in reading his works." . . . Grétry's "Mémoires," published in Paris in 1797, make amusing reading but are not vastly important as literature.

Offenbach's account of his trip to America is the work of a fifth-rate journalistic hack; certainly not worthy of a man whose music has been compared to champagne. Saint-Saëns is ponderous enough in prose; in his books he suggests the bassoon figure in the middle of the scherzo of Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony.* Gounod is insufferably sentimental. Anton Rubinstein was a great pianist and an indifferent composer, but his autobiography is even worse than his music. We see very little of the artist who created *Carmen* in the letters of Bizet. Alfred Bruneau, a composer of the second class, is a music critic of the third. Vincent d'Indy's "César Franck" is a scholarly piece of work which serves its purpose, but it is in no sense a literary masterpiece. It could be read only by a musician. What an opportunity Massenet missed in his "Souvenirs"! What a life the man had! What a career! But the book is notable neither for revelations of character nor incident. It is written in very mediocre French and even the spelling is bad. I remember Geraldine "Farar." Hugo Wolf in 1884, and for the following three years, acted as musical critic for the Vienna "Salonblatt." Ernest Newman says, "He wrote singularly well," but the excerpts and summaries that he offers us in evidence of this

prowess are not very convincing. If Wolf's reputation as a song writer is not as overwhelming as Mr. Newman would have us believe (he places him above Schubert!) it may be said without fear of contradiction that as a writer of prose he is little known even by musicians.

Cyril Scott is a facile composer of pretty music, the importance of which it would be a mistake to overestimate. Scott has also published five volumes of poetry and a volume of translations from Stefan George and Baudelaire. The titles of his books are " The Shadows of Silence and the Songs of Yesterday," " The Grave of Eros and the Book of Mournful Melodies with Dreams from the East," " The Voice of the Ancient," " The Vales of Unity," and " The Celestial Aftermath, A Springtide of the Heart, and Far-Away Songs." A. Eaglefield Hull devotes an entire chapter in his somewhat emotional book on Cyril Scott to this " poetry " as he explains that Scott at times believes himself to be greater as poet than as composer. We learn via Mr. Hull that in " The Garden of Soul-Sympathy " the composer rhapsodizes " in soul-knit ' gladness,' and harmonious visions of wondrous colour move majestically over the ear." Um, perhaps. Here is an example of Mr. Scott's " poetry ":

" Sounds of colourless dreams, of strange vagueness telling:
Immaculate music, heralding the life of sighs,
Bells across the lone lassitude, rising, rolling, endlessly swelling
Over the wasteland — solitude lost in the clear chaotic skies."

It may be noted that Mr. Scott is troubled with the mania for alliteration. Such other examples as " mournful melodies," " shadows of silence," " a far-off flute has faded," " dreamful daffodil," " ambient arms," " future fiends," dribble through his work. It is perhaps a coincidence that Mr. Scott's alphabetical position on the poetry shelf lies half way between Laurence Hope and Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

In prose Mr. Scott has written a book called " The Philosophy of Modernism." For a chapter or two he presents some interesting ideas, though clothed in a style which in no sense could be described as literature. His essay on Percy Grainger is really significant. Then he maunders through an attack on the critics which is neither clearly thought nor clearly expressed and which contains such gems of opinion as this, " All the same, it is a noteworthy fact that the great spir-

itual geniuses and adepts of the world have never condemned and denounced their fellow creatures or the works of their fellow-creatures: and to take one sublime instance — Jesus of Nazareth, etc., etc., etc." Cyril Scott is not one of the great composers and I would not have lingered so long over his case were it not for the fact that he offers one of the most typical examples of the musician as writer.

William Wallace, the composer of *Villon* and other tone-poems for orchestra, has written a book called "The Threshold of Music" which, I have been assured, is a good book, but although it has been lying around the house within easy reach for at least two years, I have never been able to read it. Edward MacDowell's lectures, delivered at Columbia University, collected in a volume entitled "Critical and Historical Essays," might best be described by the convenient epithet, piffle, pedantic piffle at that. It is only fair to state that MacDowell himself was not responsible for their publication and probably would have been violently opposed to it.

Musicians, as a rule, are even satisfied to set bad librettos when they write operas because they have no true appreciation of good poetry, good drama. Most opera books rank very low under

the head of literature and some of the greatest operas have been composed to some of the worst books. Weber, for instance, found *Oberon* inspiring and Mozart made masterpieces of *Don Giovanni* and *The Magic Flute*, while Verdi lavished some of his best music on the texts of *La Forza del Destino* and *Il Trovatore*.

There are certain exceptions, however. Berlioz was a good writer. He might have emerged a famous figure if he had simply given us his "Mémoires" and his criticism is stylized and expert, sparkling with biting phrases and trenchant words. In "A Travers Chants," "Les Grotesques de la Musique," "Les Soirées d'Orchestre," his collected journalism in short, he wielded a delightfully nervous pen. His prose, indeed, is better on the whole than his music. Perhaps this is the explanation of his power in this direction. It is really a pity he turned to tone. Schumann, too, was far from being a bad writer, although he by no means stands in a class with Berlioz in this respect. Still his writing is simple and natural and radiates a certain happy enchantment. Occasionally, indeed, the man lights on a sublime phrase. However even his *Träumerei* is better than all the two volumes of his collected prose works. The indefatigable Liszt found time for

many matters in his long life, love affairs, piano playing, composing, transcription, pushing Wagner, getting Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini* produced at Weimar, and even for the writing of a number of books. None of these can be considered a literary masterpiece, but the "Life of Chopin"[1] contains passages of great charm. To James Huneker the most eloquent page describes "an evening in the Chaussée d'Antin, for it demonstrates the Hungarian's literary gifts and feeling for the right phrase. This description of Chopin's apartment 'invaded by surprise' has a hypnotizing effect on me. The very furnishings of the chamber seem vocal under Liszt's fanciful pen." Personally I prefer the pages devoted to the polonaise. Liszt's book on the gipsies, too, is engaging although one is permitted to disagree with the facts. . . . And now we come down to a modern musician-writer, Claude Achille Debussy. Curiously enough this French composer was rather an adept with the pen. He had a penetrating sense of irony and he was not above epigram. In 1901 he became music critic for the "Revue Blanche." Two years later he held the same po-

[1] Liszt told Frederick Niecks that the enlarged edition of his "Chopin" was actually written by the Princess Wittgenstein. See "Programme Music," p. 315.

sition on the "Gil Blas." In 1903 he went to London to write his impressions of Wagner's *Tetralogy* for "Gil Blas." Passages from this review have become bywords. Witness the following: "How insufferable these people in helmets and wild-beast skins become by the time the fourth evening comes round. Remember that at each and every appearance they are accompanied by their damned *leit-motive*. There are some who even sing it themselves. It is as if a harmless lunatic were to present you with his visiting card while he declaimed lyrically what was inscribed thereon." This was one of the earliest pricks in the weaknesses of the Wagner bubble. Here is more Debussy iconoclasm: he calls Gluck a "pedant," Bach "that worthy man," Beethoven "a deaf old man," Berlioz "a monster," César Franck "a Belgian," Massenet "our most notorious master"; of the songs of Schubert he says, "They are inoffensive; they have the odour of bureau drawers of provincial old maids,— ends of faded ribbon — flowers for ever faded and dried — out of date photographs! Only they repeat the same effect for interminable stanzas and at the end of the third one wonders if one could not set to music our national Paul Delmet"; "one stumbles on Mendelssohn" in Schumann's

Faust; Grieg's music gives him " the charming and bizarre sensation of eating a pink bonbon stuffed with snow "; Saint-Saëns's *Henry VIII* is " a grand historical opera." All of this is witty and some of it is sound. However, according to J. G. Prod'homme, Debussy did not write everything he signed. He ascribes an article entitled " Enfin Seuls ! " which appeared under Debussy's name in " S. I. M." in 1915 to a " disciple " and he also informs us that the score for d'Annunzio's *Mystère de Saint Sébastien* was only finished on the day agreed upon by the collaboration of other " disciples," very familiar with the Debussy manner.

On these four men any case for musicians as writers of prose must be rested. Berlioz, it must be admitted, stands the test. Schumann and Liszt as authors would be completely forgotten (are, indeed, more or less forgotten) were it not for their music. Debussy's criticisms have not even been collected in book form, although no doubt they will be.

III

And now let us pass on to the painters. Mr. Ellis himself reminds us that " Leonardo, who was

indeed great in everything, is among the few great writers of Italian prose. Blake was first and above all an artist in design, but at the best he had so magnificent a mastery of words that beside it all but the rare best of his work in design looks thin and artificial. Rossetti was drawing and painting all his life, and yet, as has now become clear, it is only in language, verse and prose alike, that he is a supreme master. Fromentin was a painter for his contemporaries, yet his paintings are now quite uninteresting, while the few books he wrote belong to great literature, to linger over with perpetual delight. Poetry seemed to play but a small part in the life of Michelangelo, yet his sonnets stand today by the side of his drawings and marbles. Rodin has all his life been passionately immersed in plastic art; he has never written and seldom talks; yet whenever his more intimate disciples, a Judith Cladel or a Paul Gsell, have set down the things he utters, they are found to be among the most vital, fascinating, and profound sayings in the world.

"Even a bad artist with the brush may be on the road to become a good artist with the pen. Euripides was not only a soldier, he had tried to be a painter before he became a supreme tragic dramatist, and, to come down to modern times, Hazlitt

and Thackeray, both fine artists with the pen, had first been poor artists with the brush. . . . The list of good artists and bad artists who have been masters of words, from Vasari and earlier onward, is long. One sets down at random the names of Reynolds, Northcote, Delacroix, Woolner, Carrière, Leighton, Gauguin, Beardsley, Du Maurier, Besnard, to which doubtless it might be easy to add a host of others."

Mr. Ellis has forgotten many names, that of Whistler, for example, of whom Max Beerbohm says (in "Yet Again"): "He was a born writer. He wrote, in his way perfectly; and his way was his own, and the secret of it died with him. . . . His style never falters. The silhouette of no sentence is ever blurred. Every sentence is ringing with a clear vocal cadence. . . . Read any page of 'The Gentle Art of Making Enemies' and you will hear a voice in it, and see a face in it, and see gestures in it. . . . There are in England, at this moment, a few people to whom prose appeals as an art; but none of them, I think, has yet done justice to Whistler's prose. None has taken it with the seriousness it deserves. I am not surprised. When a man can express himself through two media, people tend to take him lightly in his use of the medium to which he devotes the lesser

time and energy, even though he use that medium not less admirably than the other, and even though they themselves care about it more than they care about the other. . . . Had Rossetti not been primarily a poet the expert in painting would have acquired long ago his present penetration into the peculiar value of Rossetti's painting."

There can be no personal plaint in this essay although Max Beerbohm himself is "a man who can express himself through two media," for no one, I daresay, has attempted to imply dissatisfaction with either form of expression in this case. Max's delicate and fantastic sense of caricature plays as happily through "The Happy Hypocrite," "A Christmas Garland," and "Zuleika Dobson" as it does through his drawings of the *Rentrée of Mr. George Moore into Chelsea, Mr. Thomas Hardy composing a lyric,* and *Mr. Joseph Pennell thinking of the old 'un.* He turns from one art to the other with equal facility. Like Blake and Rossetti he has made his two careers run parallel. Du Maurier, to a certain extent, was sib to these. To be sure he began to write late in life and after he had produced "Peter Ibbetson" he devoted less attention to the social drawings on which he had founded so brilliant a career in "Punch." Nevertheless he

illustrated his own novels and who can think of Peter, of Trilby, of Svengali without thinking of Du Maurier's drawings, so close was the intimacy between his two pens? Aubrey Beardsley, too, ran his twin talents side by side, although he gave himself more whole-heartedly to his drawing. Yet the fragment, "Under the Hill" indicates a sure and fantastic genius for a special kind of writing, as special in its way as his painting and wholly analogous to it in spirit. Jacques Blanche has since his youth been both a prolific writer and a prolific painter. His fame as a painter has perhaps outdistanced his fame as a writer because of the celebrity of his models. He has painted very nearly every person of importance who has been in Paris for the past thirty years from George Moore to Nijinsky. The best of his paintings probably are the self-portrait in the Uffizi in Florence and the picture of the artist Thaulow and his family which hangs in the Luxembourg Gallery in Paris. On the whole he writes better than he paints; his essay on Degas is probably the best which exists. Wyndham Lewis, too, turns from canvas to paper with infinite ease; so does Gordon Craig, while Santiago Rusiñol, the Spaniard, divides his time between painting and writing plays.[1]

[1] To these names may be added those of Oliver Herford,

Often, however, as Mr. Ellis has suggested was the case with Thackeray and Hazlitt, the bad painter takes to writing. Thomas Hardy, for example, began his career as an architect, an allied art, and he has used his knowledge of the technique of this art very concretely in his books. The hero of "A Laodicean" is not the only architect in Mr. Hardy's works. Hardy, indeed, illustrated his own "Wessex Poems." [1] George Moore was a painter and it was while he was studying his art in Paris that he imbibed much of the atmosphere that is so essential a part of his books. We owe to this phase of his life such works as "The Confessions of a Young Man," and "Memoirs of My Dead Life," but could such a passage as the description of the trees in "A Story Teller's Holiday" have been written by any but a painter? I hardly think so. Holbrook Jackson tells us that George Bernard Shaw as a boy never wanted to write. He wished to draw and Michel-

Howard Pyle, Philip Thicknesse, Amélie Rives, Rollo Peters, Kahlil Gibran, the Syrian poet-painter, Mina Loy, Marsden Hartley, Charles Demuth, and Lee Simonson.

[1] W. B. Yeats intended to follow his father's example and become a painter. He went to art school in Dublin. So did Æ. Rudyard Kipling illustrated his own "Just So Stories." Robert W. Chambers and Roland Pertwee were once painters. Samuel Butler was not only a painter but a composer as well!

angelo was his boyish ideal. Gautier had the intention of becoming a painter when he first went to Paris. He entered the studio of Rioult for a period. "He had the painter's eye," writes Huneker, "the quick retentive vision, the colour sense, above all the sense of composition." The creator of "Une Nuit de Cléopâtre" was certainly a painter, and when Fokine arranged this picture-poem as a Russian ballet he had but to follow the colour-suggestion of the painter-poet. Huysmans was a descendant of a long line of Dutch painters, one of whom, Cornelius Huysmans of Mechlin, has a certain fame among the lesser landscape artists of the great period. Huneker writes, "Joris-Karl Huysmans should have been a painter; his indubitable gift for form and colour were by some trick of circumstance transposed to literature." Remy de Gourmont called him an *eye*. His description of the carcass of a cow hanging outside a butcher shop is certainly the work of a painter: "As in a hothouse, a marvellous vegetation flourished in the carcass. Veins shot out on every side like the trails of bind-weed; dishevelled branch-work extended itself along the body, an efflorescence of entrails unfurled their violet-tinted corallas, and big clusters of fat stood out, a sharp white, against the red medley of quiv-

ering flesh." But it is unnecessary to particularize: "A Rebours," "La Cathédrale," "La Bas" are all painted from cover to cover. . . . Octave Mirbeau painted in his moments of leisure and so great an artist as Claude Monet looked upon his brush-work with favour. He owned a very large collection of pictures by Monet, Renoir, Cézanne, Pissarro, Van Gogh, Rodin, and others which have been sold since his death. Turn to the description of the garden in "Le Jardin des Supplices" and you will see how he turned his other talent to account. With some writers the analogy between writing and painting becomes perfectly clear. It is so with Gautier and Huysmans. Beerbohm says of Whistler, "Yes, that painting and that writing are marvellously akin; and such differences as you will see in them are superficial merely." It is obvious that Joseph Hergesheimer approaches his work from the point of view of a painter. He selects and describes exactly as an artist in design might select and describe. He turns to his palette for a touch of cobalt blue or yellow ochre exactly as a painter might turn to his palette. This characteristic of Hergesheimer is so marked that several sagacious reviewers have noted that "Java Head" and "The Three Black Pennys" are to all intents and purposes *painted.* The facts in

the case are that Hergesheimer began his career as a painter, painted for years before he began to write at all.

IV

Inspiration, as it affects the artist, is a subject I do not approach without the proper dread. Either it is something mystic, something entirely beyond human ken, something "ecstatic," as Arthur Machen would have it, or else it becomes, in matter of fact English, something very near the ludicrous. Mr. James Branch Cabell shows us with withering irony in "The Cream of the Jest" how a middle-aged, pudgy, greyish-haired, commonplace sort of man, whose conversation seemingly never rises above the most banal level, derives the inspiration for the most fantastic romance from his equally commonplace wife and the broken cover of a cold-cream jar. The mystery of the procedure is emphasized by the obvious fact that "The Cream of the Jest" is sufficiently scandent, although in style, manner, and matter, it is contradictory to a degree with which no satisfactory comparison comes readily to mind. Mr. Cabell undoubtedly writes very personal books, but in his own way he comes nearer perhaps to the

solution of certain problems of the author than any one else.

And here we have, perhaps, the first glimmer of understanding. For Mr. Cabell's Felix Kennaston depends on his wife, the cover of the cold-cream jar, and *other men's books*. Even on straggling downright stupid conversation about the weather. In Arthur Machen's "The Hill of Dreams," Lucian Taylor, the author-hero, evolves a complete and mystic comprehension of all the manifestations of sex from the accidental embrace of a farm girl. The author, the painter, are thus reduced to models, however far-fetched and ridiculous the models may appear in the light cast by the finished work. George Sand indubitably loved all her lovers but somewhere in the back of her head she realized that their ultimate purpose was "copy." Some one once asked Maurice Maeterlinck what had been his inspiration for the construction of *Pelléas et Mélisande* and his reply was, "I was writing a piece that suited my wife." Cecil Forsythe, in his book "Nationalism in Music" educes the interesting theory that a great sea-power never produces great musicians, but that authors and painters flourish under triumphant mercantile, social, and political régimes.

Painters, writers, draw their material from the

world. They must mingle with men, understand and see life, no matter how far removed from life their finished art may be. Art, it may be stated categorically, is certainly not a reproduction of nature, and yet, without nature, or some human aspect of it, the painter, the writer are helpless. Perhaps you have never seen a Monet hay-stack in a real field, but unless such a thing as a hay-stack existed, unless the sun had lighted that hay-stack, the picture would have been impossible. It is not important or essential that Leonardo's *Monna Lisa* should exactly reproduce the effect of the model, but if such a thing as a woman did not breathe in the world, the picture never could have been painted. Machen detects his ideal quality of ecstasy at the highest degree in Homer, Rabelais, and Cervantes, all men of action and wide experience. Indeed he points out that one of the reasons why "The Pickwick Papers" is not as great as the "Odyssey" is because Dickens was brought up in Camden Town. It is not carelessly then that Remy de Gourmont called Huysmans "an eye" and his dictum that whatever is deeply thought is well written is certainly just. Havelock Ellis adds that whatever is *deeply observed* is well said. The artist in design, he continues to point out, is by the very nature of

his work compelled to observe deeply, precisely, beautifully. He is never able to revolve in a vacuum, or flounder in a morass, or run after a mirage. So when he takes up his pen, by training, by acquired instinct, he still follows with the new instrument, deeply, precisely, beautifully, the same mystery of Nature.

The musician, whose art is the most mystic, the most profound, the most "ecstatic" of any, simply because it deals with clang-tints and not with more definite symbols, is not, as Cecil Forsythe shows us, inspired by great deeds, by political confusion, by mercantile progress, by social intercourse. War never produces great music and England and America have produced less good music than Finland and Scandinavia, not to speak of Bohemia and Italy. The great Beethoven wandered alone, and he wrote some of his finest music after he became stone-deaf. The musical artist, indeed, shut up in a garret, may derive his masterpiece simply through the process of introspection. There is no need for him to read; an illiterate composer is a possible figure. "The song, the fugue, the sonata have absolutely no analogues in the world of Nature," writes W. H. Hadow. "Their basis is psychological, not physical, and in them the artist is in direct touch with his idea, and pre-

sents it to us, as it were, first hand. Given sound as the plastic medium, Music asks nothing more: it creates its subjects by the spontaneous activity of the mind." And W. F. Apthorp says, "The bonds which hold Painting, Sculpture, and Poetry fast to Nature are far tougher and of more inexorable grip than any connection discoverable between Nature and Music. . . . We may safely assert that, though a certain modicum of Realism, or truth to Nature, is indispensable to the artistic status of Poetry, Painting, or Sculpture, Music can perfectly well do without it; also that such modicum of Realism — when present in Music — can not be regarded as any true measure of her artistic status."

It may be regarded as a significant fact that the four composers whom I previously selected as types of the fairly successful musician-writer all resorted to this "modicum of realism" in their music. Every one of them was what is known as a "literary" composer. Every one of them wrote "program music." Every one of them leaned on Nature, books, and painting for his inspiration. Not only was Schumann's *Carneval* so inspired; at least two of his symphonies had a definite starting point somewhere outside music itself. Berlioz and Liszt are notorious cases. It is only necessary

to recall the titles of Berlioz's symphonies, *Fantastique*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Harold in Italy* or of Liszt's [1] tone-poems (a form which he invented) *Les Préludes*, *Tasso*, *Mazeppa*, to realize that although music was the end to them it was not always the means. With Debussy it was the same: *l'Après-midi d'un Faune* had its beginning in Mallarmé; *La Mer*, *Nocturnes*, *Iberia*, in Nature herself! And it may be generally observed, indeed, that musicians who use the pen to write prose or poetry, are usually men who go outside music itself for the inspiration for their music. This is as true of Richard Wagner, Cyril Scott, Edward MacDowell, as it is of Liszt and Berlioz.

But what about rhythm? What about the so-called "musical quality" in good literature? In "The Critic as Artist," Oscar Wilde says, "Since the introduction of printing and the fatal development of the habit of reading amongst the middle and lower classes there has been a tendency to appeal more and more to the eye and less and less to the ear, which is really the sense which, from the standpoint of pure art, it should seek to please, and by whose canons of pleasure it should abide

[1] Frederick Niecks says of Liszt: "Except that it is more logical, his musical style is a pretty exact likeness of his literary style."

always. Even the work of Mr. Pater . . . is often far more like a piece of mosaic than a passage in music. We, in fact, have made writing a definite mode of composition and have located it as a form of design. The Greeks, upon the other hand, regarded writing simply as a means of chronicling. Their test was always the spoken word in its musical and rhetorical relation. The voice was the medium and the ear the critic. . . . When Milton could no longer write he began to sing. Who could match the measures of Comus with the measures of Samson Agonistes or of Paradise Lost or Regained? When he became blind he composed as everybody should compose, with the voice purely. . . ."

This is all very well; perhaps the voice *was* once the means of composition; perhaps the Greek musicians could compose in words as well as tone. We know very little about them. Nowadays in Wilde's own phrase, "We have made writing a definite mode of composition and have located it as a form of design." . . . There are certainly writers of today who make an especial effort to write prose that will read aloud well. I believe that Henry James dictated certain of his novels with this idea in mind. But this rhythmical quality we note in writing is perhaps nearer to the

rhythmical quality we note in painting to that we note in music. Balance and a sense of proportion, light and shade, all these qualities are as instinctive to a writer as they are to a painter. He places a word as the painter places an object or a point on the canvas where it may catch the light and offer contrast to another word or point or object. Balance, light and shade, sense of proportion are all part of the musician's jargon too. But if the rhythmical quality we note in music is *identical* with the rhythmical quality of prose or poetry, it must be remembered that the musician creates rhythm with pure tone, *sound*, whereas in any good prose or poetry sense and definite meaning must play their part. Most of us are unlike Madame de Staël who delighted in the melody of verse, and demanded nothing more. She would read a favourite specimen and then declare, " That is what I call poetry! It is delicious, and so much the more so because it does not convey a single idea to me! "

But probably the best and truest reason why musicians cannot write words is definitely a Puritanic reason. Of all artists the musician is the only one who can express himself freely. In a casual essay James Huneker once observed, " Because of its opportunities for the expansion of the

soul music has ever attracted the strong free sons of earth. It is, par excellence, the art masculine. The profoundest truths, the most blasphemous ideas, may be incorporated within the walls of a symphony, and the police none the wiser." The painter even less than the writer can reproduce all that he really sees. Nor can the sculptor do more than the painter. These artists, then, find themselves free, unrestricted in the medium of words, *because hitherto they have observed and felt deeply so much more than they could express on canvas or in marble.* But the musician feels bound and tied when he is forced to use words. He cannot say as much (nor can he say it as vaguely) as he can in his own music. If a law is passed as pendent to the now celebrated Eighteenth Amendment (and very probably it will be) making it a criminal offence to mention vodka or absinthe or even beer in a book, or to paint a picture in which people may be seen to be drinking, the musician may still compose bacchanales and brindisi; he may be as abandonedly Dionysian, as intoxicated and intoxicating as he pleases. Nobody is going to prohibit performances of the *Seventh Symphony.* The cream of the jest is that our national anthem, *The Star Spangled Banner* was originally a drinking song!

February 21, 1919.

A Note on Philip Thicknesse

"All books save those which subserve some fact such as, say, ferro-concrete or the migration of swallows or the differential calculus, and even, perhaps, these also, are about persons. The best books are about one person — the author."

Holbrook Jackson.

A Note on Philip Thicknesse

I

WHAT a terrible fate awaits a library when its master dies! The penniless widow and her children, the bereaved pets, cats, dogs, monkeys, and parrots, stand a better chance than the beloved books which remain to mourn their erstwhile owner. Edmond de Goncourt considered the problem and left the following solution of it in his will: "My wish is that my drawings, my prints, my curiosities, my books — in a word, these things of art which have been the joy of my life — shall not be consigned to the cold tomb of a museum and subjected to the stupid glance of the careless passerby; but I require that they shall be dispersed under the hammer of the auctioneer, so that the pleasure which the acquirement of each one of them has given me shall be given again in each case to some inheritor of my own tastes." . . . Goncourt was certain that each of his treasures would reach the man who loved it best. I would not be. I cannot bear to think of sending my cats or my books to the auction block. My first edition of Oscar Wilde's "Salome," with its faded silver and purple cover, printed in the

Rue du Dragon in Paris, and now bound in white vellum by Vittorio de Toldo in Venice, would surely find an admirer or two. So would Champfleury's "Les Chats," the most sympathetic and profound of the many cat books, embellished with hundreds of drawings, including several by the Japanese Hokusai and a strange Russian poster depicting gleeful rats and mice bearing a dead puss on a cart to her grave, but more than these an etching of a cat among flowers by Manet, who also designed the poster for this book, representing the meeting (and impending doom for one of them) of two male felines on a chimney-potted roof-top. This poster is now as rare as copies of the first edition of "Sister Carrie." . . . Nor do I worry over the fate of the English edition of "A Story Teller's Holiday," nor over that of several of George Moore's earlier works, originally the property of James Huneker, who, as is his wont, has plentifully supplied the margins with mirth-provoking comments. . . . But there are books on my shelves whose mere titles will convey nothing to the stolid purchaser in the auction room. Who, for example, will know enough to buy my copy of Frank L. Boyden's "Popular American Composers," unless some one, fifty or sixty years from now when I die, may remember to

have read my account of it in "The Merry-go-round"? Who will bid for my copy of "Harry" by the author of "Mrs. Jerningham's Journal," also in my possession? These long narrative poems of the seventies, written perhaps in imitation of Owen Meredith's "Lucile" are priceless, and yet I myself picked them up for five and ten cents respectively, and very probably at an auction sale they would go for less. But if a prospective buyer turns to page 62 of "Harry" his eye will light on this marked passage:

"O, women have no temptations at all;
They have only to keep their white lives white;
But men are so tempted, that men must fall —
O wonderful Harry who stands upright!"

and if he further flips the leaves I think he will purchase the book at whatever price. . . . But suppose some Bible student should bid for Francis Jacox's delightfully misnamed book, "Bible Music," or suppose that the Hanslick or H. E. Krehbiel of the period, intrigued by the title and Gavarni's piquant illustrations, should take "Les Petits Mystères de l'Opéra" away from its rightful owner, who should be a *Follies* girl. Who else could appreciate or find useful Laure's daily prayer:

"*Mon coeur de jeune fille, ô Dieu, vers toi s'élance!*
Prends en pitié mes maux et guéris ma souffrance.
Oh! fais qu'un prince russe ou qu'un milord anglais
De Londre ou Moscou vienne admirer mes attraits.
Le fétide marais est mortel à la rose;
Non, pour la pauvreté je ne suis pas éclose,
Le fiacre me déplaît; l'omnibus me fait mal,
Ce qu'il me faut c'est un briska — plus un cheval."

Whether God was good to Laure or not, Albéric Second, the author, does not tell us; he hastens on to describe the débris on Lélia's dressing table:

"*Un citron à demi grignoté;*
Une livre de café rôti;
Un cornet de tabac à priser;
Deux tablettes de chocolat;
Cinq ou six bouts de cigares;
Une poignée de haricots secs;
Une croûte de fromage de Gruyères;
Un collier de verroteries;
Deux brioches émiettées;

Un morceau de savon rose;
Une grappe de raisin de Corinthe;
Un petit chat, âgé seulement de quelques semaines;
Un paquet de cartes crasseuses;
Et un pot de pommade, rempli, jusqu'aux bords, d'un épais et onctueux raisiné."

I will not attempt to translate this very charming free verse of the year 1844. It seems obvious, however, that Albéric Second was one of the earliest, if not the earliest, of the *imagistes*. There is my copy of "The Baronet and the Butterfly," autographed with Whistler's butterfly W; there is the first edition of the "Works" of Max Beerbohm; there is "La Cathédrale," bound in amethyst, and ruby, and emerald leather, into which these precious stones have been set, until the cover seems to glow like one of the windows at Chartres which Huysmans describes; there is Dr. Burney's "The Present State of Music in France and Italy," 1773, and nearby Aluigi's "Storia dell' Abate Pietro Metastasio," published in Assisi in 1783; and there is Philip Thicknesse's "Journey through France and a part of Spain," published for the author in 1776.

II

Philip Thicknesse was an irascible and cultivated English gentleman-adventurer with a kind of genius for expressing himself. His life, his published writings, an account of his various friendships and quarrels, of his three wives and more children, are of unusual interest to analist and onlooker alike; even a superficial study of them brings before us a complete and very living picture of eighteenth century life with its causes and consequences and its essential decorations. For Thicknesse's life was both active and decorative. It was exceedingly rich, for the life of so full-blooded a man, in delicate nuances; in the foreground of the picture our hero struggles with innumerable figures in political, social, artistic, army, and even religious life; while in the background house-furnishings, clothes, music, and painting, contribute to his pleasure and ours. Not the least of these pleasures was an intense fondness for animals of all sorts, monkeys, birds, dogs, and horses. He was a most personal writer; he only wrote about himself, or about other things and people as they affected himself, and out of his twenty-four books, or out of any two of them,

for that matter, you can with no great difficulty, reconstruct both period and personality, not in the manner of a cold steel engraving, but with all the warmth and colour of a painting. Thicknesse was not a phrase-maker nor was he in any conscious way an artist, but he succeeded so well in transmitting himself, his ideas, his friends and enemies, and the things he saw, to paper, that his pages still glow with informing life. You must not, however, expect to be transported into the rococo charm of Vernon Lee's Italian eighteenth century. To be sure you will meet with powdered hair, lace coats, and red coats trimmed with gold braid, snuff, crimson-velvet breeches, white wigs and plumes, blue silk capuchins, four-wheeled chaises, and coffee houses. And if you miss the name of Metastasio you will be delighted to run across references to *The Beggar's Opera.*

Philip Thicknesse was born in 1719 and he died in 1792; he therefore may be said to represent the complete span of the eighteenth century. He was the son of a rector of Northamptonshire, we are told in Sidney Lee's "Dictionary of National Biography," and he was sent first to Aynhoe and later to Westminster School. His father then placed him with an apothecary bearing the very eighteenth century name of Marmaduke Tisdall, but

Philip's taste for the chemist's calling appears to have been meagre and in 1735 when he was 16 years old he left for Georgia with General Oglethorpe. Thus his travels and adventures began, travels and adventures which were to continue throughout his long life. The account of his two years in America to be found in "Memoirs and Anecdotes of Philip Thicknesse" (1788) is exceedingly diverting. His distaste for the white settlers in the colony and his sympathy for the Indians led him to seek the settlement of a native king on the Susquehanna River. "In this situation," he tells us, "I wanted nothing but a *female friend* (the quaint eighteenth century use of italics), and I had almost determined to take to wife one of Queen *Cenauke's* maids of honor. I seriously paid my addresses to her and she in return honor'd me with the appellation of *Auche* (friend). She had receiv'd a pair of Indian boots, some paint, looking glass, a comb, a pair of scissars, as tokens of my love, and one Buffaloe's skin had certainly held us had not an extraordinary incident arose which determined me to return immediately to England." The incident was a dream in which his mother appeared to him, apparently as a departed spirit. This vision was so intense that he believed his mother had died. He returned

to England at once (in 1737) only to find the estimable woman alive and in perfect health. This episode should have weakened his faith in his fatidical powers but there is no evidence that it did.

In England he was employed by trustees of the company until he lost Oglethorpe's favour by speaking too plainly about the way affairs were managed in Georgia. His next adventure was in Jamaica where he obtained a lieutenancy in an independent company and where for a time he was engaged in desultory warfare with wild Negroes. The greater part of the first volume of his "Memoirs" is occupied with this period, together with much abuse and controversial matter concerning a certain James MacKittrick. Whether or not an English libel law existed in the eighteenth century I do not know, but MacKittrick and Thicknesse seem to have proceeded in the mud-throwing game with no reserve whatever. Here is a sample passage from the "Memoirs": "I am now arrived at that important period of my life (yet a compleat half century ago) that James MacKittrick, alias Adair, hath charged me with having the sole command of a party of soldiers when in the woods of Jamaica, and falling into an ambush of the wild Negroes; securing my own person by an early re-

treat, and leaving the battle to be fought by my victorious Sergeant, who brought many of them in prisoners, at the instant that I was boasting of my personal exploits. I will not call this double named doctor a *beast*, a *reptile*, an *assassin*, a *murder-monger*, but the reader will, I am sure excuse me, in saying he is a base libeller, a liar, and a wicked defamer, and has no pretensions to be considered as a gentleman, if he has dared to write, print, and publish such falsehoods."

Thicknesse's account of the fight with wild Negroes which follows this diatribe is picturesque in the extreme, none the less so because the author to a great extent sympathized with the cause of the blacks. Whether MacKittrick or Thicknesse gives a true account of what happened in Jamaica this much is certain, that Thicknesse disagreed with his brother officers and returned to England. On this return journey the ship caught fire, but the fire was extinguished and the voyage proceeded. In 1744–5 he was sent to the Mediterranean fleet under Admiral Medley, and in February, 1753, he procured by purchase the Lieutenant-Governorship of Land Guard Fort, Suffolk, which he held until 1766. His life at the fort was marked by a series of dissensions. His particular enemy with whom he must have been in

almost continuous disagreement was Francis Vernon (afterwards Lord Orwell and Earl of Shipbrooke), then Colonel of the Suffolk militia. As a last ironic touch he sent the Colonel the ludicrous present of a wooden gun, and became involved thereby in an action for libel with the result that he was confined three months in the king's bench prison and fined £300. He later exhibited the wooden gun, labelled with some depreciatory verses, in front of his house at Bath. In a letter to the "Lady of Admiral G" Thicknesse, with admirable humour, tells the story of the wooden gun at some length in the second volume of his "Memoirs." While he continually quarreled with those whose station in military or civil life was above his own, his relations with those under him seem to have been distinguished by the finest feelings, the most scrupulous propriety. He was very humane as the following passage taken from an account of a deserting sergeant condemned to death, will testify: "It is an easy matter to sentence a man to death, or to inflict a thousand lashes on his back, but it is terrible to endure; during the fourteen years I commanded Land Guard Fort I made the old invalids do their duty like soldiers, and I have a certificate under all their hands that I did so, and that no man during that

period had his shirt stript from his body, or a lash upon his back." And note this passage concerning slavery: "I have seen the slavery of the West Indies, and the slavery of the Galleys, but the *veriest slaves* I have ever seen, are the day labourers of England and Ireland, and the *all work* maid servants of London." It was with the American Indian, the African Negro, that Thicknesse sympathized in his visits to this continent and the adjacent islands, and later, during the Revolution, he took the part of the colony against England. "Is it probable," asks Thicknesse in 1776, "that all the fleets and armies of Great Britain can conquer America? — England may as well attempt moving that Continent on this side of the Atlantic."

In 1754 walking near Land Guard Fort he met Thomas Gainsborough and for twenty years thereafter constituted himself patron of this artist, of whose genius he considered himself the discoverer. He wrote, I think, the first life of Gainsborough, a book which has been of considerable use to later biographers of the painter. He even induced Gainsborough to move from Ipswich to Bath but in 1774 the inevitable squabble occurred and the friendship was ended.

This quarrel, being fully described in "The Life

of Thomas Gainsborough," is not mentioned in the two volumes of the "Memoirs" which I have seen (a third was added later) but many others are. For instance he tells how and why he beat up Mr. Hutton Briggs with a cane at Portsmouth. Two young misses sent by a wifeless father to Mr. and Mrs. Thicknesse at Calais had the misfortune to bring a carnivorous dog with them which straightway devoured Mrs. Thicknesse's favourite paroquet. As a result the master of the house packed the young ladies off to a convent, where their father, having no home for them, permitted them to remain, under lock and key, for three years! In a chapter entitled "Anecdote of a Lord, a Monk, and a Fool," Thicknesse relates how the Earl of Coventry desired him to secure from one of the holy men at Montserrat some botanical specimens for which his lordship eventually refused to pay. . . . Even a quarrel with the Archbishop of Canterbury over a weathercock and a guinea is set down in bitter detail, although with the properly humble recriminatory spirit.

But perhaps his greatest quarrel was with England. In 1766 he settled at Welwyn, Hertfordshire, removing thence to Monmouthshire, and in 1768 to Bath where he purchased a house in the Crescent. His long cherished hope of succeed-

ing to £12,000 from the family of his first wife was destroyed by an unsuccessful appeal to the House of Lords in 1775. He regarded himself as driven out of his country and he resolved to abandon it and settle in Spain. Accompanied by his wife, two daughters, a man-servant and his monkey, he set out from Calais in his own cabriolet. "He is," writes Havelock Ellis, "the accomplished representative of a certain type of Englishman, a type, indeed, once regarded by the world at large outside England as that of the essential Englishman. The men of this type have, in fact, a passion for exploring the physical world, they are often found outside England, and for some strange reason they seem more themselves, more quintessentially English, when they are out of England. They are gentlemen and they are patriots. But they have a natural aptitude for disgust and indignation, and they cannot fail to find ample exercise for that aptitude in the affairs of their own country. So in a moment of passion they shake the dust of England off their feet to rush abroad, where, also, however,— though they are far too intelligent to be inappreciative of what they find,— they meet even more to arouse their disgust and indignation, and in the end they usually come back to England. . . . For the most part the manners and

customs of this type of man are only known to us by hearsay which we may refuse to credit. But about Thicknesse there is no manner of doubt; he has written himself down; he is the veridic and positive embodiment of the type. . . . The type is scarcely that of the essential Englishman, yet it is one type, and a notably interesting type, really racy of the soil. Borrow — less of a fine gentleman than Thicknesse, but more of a genius — belonged to the type. Landor, a man cast in a much grander mould, was yet of the same sort, and the story which tells how he threw his Italian cook out of the window, and then exclaimed with sudden compunction, "Good God! I forgot the violets," is altogether in the spirit of Thicknesse. Trelawney was a man of this kind, and so was Sir Richard Burton. . . . They are an uncomfortable race of men, but in many ways admirable; we should be proud rather than ashamed of them. Their unreasonableness, their inconsiderateness, their irritability, their singular gleams of insight, their exuberant energy of righteous vituperation, the curious irregularities of their minds,— however personally alien one may happen to find such qualities,— can never fail to interest and delight."

Thicknesse passed through the South of France into Catalonia, where he sojourned for a time at

Barcelona, but aside from his visit to the Monastery of Montserrat, he found Spain even more unpleasant than England and was back in Bath within the year. A delightfully discursive book, full of charming description and anecdote, "A Year's Journey through France and a part of Spain," which is in my possession, was the result. The two volumes are illustrated with drawings from Thicknesse's own pen and he might therefore be added to my list of painter-authors. The account of Montserrat, which is long and detailed, and which was made before the various despoliations suffered by the monastery, makes the book of especial interest to those, and there are many such, for whom the very name of Montserrat has a unique thrill. There are vivid accounts of the jewels of the madonna: "There are four crowns for the head of the Virgin; two of plated gold, richly set with diamonds; two of solid gold, one of which has two thousand five hundred large emeralds in it, and is valued at fifty thousand ducats; the fourth and richest, is set with one thousand one hundred and twenty-four diamonds, five of which number are valued at five hundred ducats each; eighteen hundred large pearls, of equal size; thirty-eight large emeralds, twenty-one zaphirs, and five rubies; and at the top of this

crown is a gold ship, adorned with diamonds of eighteen thousand dollars' value. The gold alone of these crowns weighs twenty-five pounds, and with the jewels and setting, upwards of fifty. These crowns have been made at Montserrat, from the gold and separate jewels presented to the convent from time to time by the crowned heads and princes of Europe." The legend of Juan Guerin and the miraculous founding of the monastery is told in a fascinating folk-spirit style. Alec Trusselby could do no better. Thicknesse climbed to each of the hermitages and he describes them all, each hut on its tiny pinnacle of mountain overhanging a precipice, overgrown with extravagant floral vegetation. The holy brothers were forbidden to kill meat or to entertain pets in their huts but one of them evaded the law by meeting his tame birds outside. They nestled in his beard and his garment, and Thicknesse, who had just bought a new fowling piece in Barcelona, was so moved by the pretty spectacle that he registered a vow never to use it, a vow which he breaks a few hundred pages later. . . . Most wonderful of all is the description of the blind mule which, laden with baskets, and unaccompanied, made the perilous tour of the hermitages once a day carrying the monks their food.

The casual reader, however, the lover of literature and life, will be more amused and delighted by the ordinary adventures of the day and night, the description of inns, of people met by the way, of the astonishing monkey who refuses all social intercourse with elderly male monkeys encountered on the road, fearing they may be his father, thus anticipating by a century Samuel Butler's Ernest in "The Way of All Flesh." He is alive to all impressions and he puts everything down from an exact description with drawings of the Maison Carrée at Nîmes to an account of his overturning a dish of spinach on a maidservant's head. Thicknesse had observed, with amazement and disgust, the preparation of this spinach, in the courtyard of the inn. He philosophizes about the comparative amount of drinking in the countries he visits; he compares the French with the English; he gossips about Madame de Pompadour; he gives advice to young Englishmen about to travel, warning them about women and gambling; he meets a pretty girl sculling across a French river, asks her what she does in the winter when the river is frozen, and elicits the reply that she has two talents, a fact he faithfully records; there are pages about the dangers that beset the path of the traveller, bandits, card-sharpers, gipsies, wicked

aguaziles; there are more pages about priests, heretics, beggars, and grandees; he visits his daughter, immured as a nun in a convent at Ardres because small-pox has ravaged her face, and finding that the mother-superior, through ignorance or cupidity or both, has let rooms on the parlor floors to two English women whose pretensions to respectability he suspects, in some heat he adjures the holy mother to hustle them out at once, lest their worldly influence shall corrupt his daughter's peace of mind;[1] he sees and describes, in horrible detail, the more horrible because he himself is horrified and tries to escape but cannot push through the crowd, an

[1] That Thicknesse had ground for his suspicions we may believe after reading what Mrs. Emily James Putnam has to say about eighteenth century French convents in "The Lady": "Many convents received ladies from the world as transient guests and these inmates brought the world with them. Madame de Genlis, shortly after her marriage, sojourned in a convent while her husband was absent on military duty. She enjoyed herself thoroughly. The abbess used to invite men to dinner in her apartment; at the carnival, Madame de Genlis was allowed to give in the convent-parlour two balls a week attended by nuns and school girls; when these amusements were insufficient she would sometimes rise at midnight, run about the corridor in the costume of the devil and wake the nuns in their cells. When she found a sister very sound asleep she would paint her cheeks and affix a *mouche* or two. The little girls were often allowed free access to the lady-boarders and listened with round eyes to their tales of life in the world."

execution: a man is broken on the wheel and the executioner's aged mother assists him in his horrid job, and not without relish; he avoids the coronation of Louis XVI at Rheims and tells us why; he is mistreated by Messrs. Curtoys and Wombwell, who refuse to recognize his English bank notes in Barcelona,[1] and he sets down the whole transaction, together with his full opinions of the gentlemen; he paints a picture of the fandango and even prints the music to which it may be danced; in fact he gossips and chats and scolds and praises in the loosest and freest manner, probably without considering himself either an artist or a writer, and yet skill of the most acute kind has seldom produced so entertaining a book of travel. In fact I ramble through the two musty old volumes, full of obsolete and mistaken spellings and S's like F's, with as much pleasure as I would take rambling through the same scenes with as gossipy and amusing a companion.

In 1784 Thicknesse erected in his private grounds at the Hermitage the first monument raised in England to Chatterton's memory. Five years later this restless spirit purchased a barn

[1] W. D. Howells had a similar experience with a letter of credit at Valladolid in 1911, which he recounts in his "Familiar Spanish Travels."

at Sandgate near Hytte and converted it into a dwelling place, from which he could gaze on the shores of France into which country he made another excursion in 1791, visiting Paris during the early days of the revolution. In the following year he was back in Bath, but he left again for the continent and died in a coach near Boulogne on his way to Paris with his wife on November 19, 1792. He was buried in the Protestant Cemetery at Boulogne.

He was married three times. In 1742 he married Maria, only daughter of John Lanove of Southampton, a French refugee. She died early in 1749 and on November 10 of the same year he married Elizabeth Touchet, eldest daughter of the Earl of Castlehaven. Her sister, Lady Mary Touchet, met the Pretender at a ball in Paris in 1745. Attracted by her personal charm he took her as a partner, communicated to her the details of his expedition, even ripped the star from his breast and gave it to her. . . . She died at the age of twenty. Elizabeth Touchet Thicknesse died March 28, 1862, leaving three sons and three daughters. The eldest son succeeded to the Barony of Audley. His father hated him and in his will desired his right hand to be cut off and sent to Lord Audley, " to remind him of his duty to

God, after having so long abandoned the duty he owed to his father." There is a further reminiscence of this family feud in the complete title of his last book which reads, " Memoirs and Anecdotes of Philip Thicknesse, late Lieutenant Governor of Land Guard Fort, and unfortunately Father to George Touchet, Baron Audley." The quarrel with George, which seems to have been about money, eventually extended to another son, Philip. . . . Thicknesse's third wife, Anne (1737–1824), daughter of Thomas Ford, he married September 27, 1762. She was a musician, playing the guitar, the viola da gamba, and the musical glasses, and singing Handel and other old Italian airs. She even gave concerts in London. The customs inspector at Cette on the way to Spain found " a bass viol, two guittars, a fiddle, and some other musical instruments " in Thicknesse's baggage. . . . The third Mrs. Thicknesse also used the pen; she wrote sketches of the lives and writings of the ladies of France.

Twenty-four books of Thicknesse are listed although none of them is easy to procure nowadays. Perhaps the most important are " Observations on the customs and manners of the French nation (1766; 2nd edition, 1779; 3rd edition, 1789); " Useful hints to those who make the tour

of France" (1768); "Sketches and Characters of the most Eminent and Singular Persons now living" (1770); "A Treatise on the art of decyphering and writing in cypher, with an harmonic alphabet (1772); "A Year's Journey through France and a part of Spain" (1777; 2nd edition, 1778; 3rd edition, 1789); "Queries to Lord Audley" (1782); "A Sketch of the Life and Paintings of Thomas Gainsborough" (1788); and the "Memoirs" (1788–91).

At one time in his life he became extremely interested in the subject of gall-stones. He wrote a book on their exorcism called "The Valetudinarian's Bath Guide" and to cure Lord Thurlow, with whom, of course, he afterwards quarrelled, he prescribed a trotting horse, "to render the externals of the gall stones perfectly smooth." He recurs to the subject, which must have obsessed him for a score of years, in his "Memoirs" and also discusses therein other bladder complaints with some freedom. There is a further chapter in this extremely diverting book about Mrs. Mary Tuft of Godalming, who asserted that she gave birth to rabbits, delivering fifteen in a batch, and a few ironic paragraphs are shot at St. Andre, the anatomist, who wrote a pamphlet to prove that rabbits were preternatural human foetuses in the

form of quadrupeds. At the close of the first volume in place of the listed errors, usual in books printed at this period, one finds the following statement: "Errata for *both* volumes. The author is in his Seventieth Year and never pretended to be an accurate writer," and in the extensive list of patrons it seems very pleasant to meet David Garrick and Thomas Gainsborough.

III

I should find little difficulty in hitting upon a future owner for my Philip Thicknesse. Indeed I know few men or women who would not cherish this book and doubtless the ideal way to dispose of one's books is give each by deed of testament to the friend best fitted to receive it. But there are many objections to this procedure. Tastes change. Perhaps when I am through with my books Peter Whiffle, who now ardently desires my set of Lafcadio Hearn, may be browsing in other fields; perhaps he may have acquired a set of his own. Noël Haddon assured me but the other day that she would be willing to see me die if I would leave in her hands my Petronius, bound in old rose quaintly tooled with golden fruit. But in a few weeks Noël will have satisfied her curiosity in re-

gard to Petronius and will turn her roving envious attention to my Catulle Mendès, bound in gay Florentine wall-papers.

Nor could I leave all my books to one person, unless I added to the bequest a suitable sum for their upkeep. For who is there who wants all of another man's books? Who is there, indeed, who wants half of another man's books?

And, still studying the problem, I wandered before my shelves, flipping open the covers of this and that beloved volume, bestowing admiration and approval while yet I might, sometimes on the contents, sometimes on the printing, sometimes on the binding, sometimes, even, on the illustrations, and I cast about in my mind for a decent method of disposal after I have joined the oblivious throng. For I could not tolerate the idea of letting my books run the risk of the auction block. I have loved them in this life and I decided that they must rest safely after my death. Days and days I have spent in dusty and splendid bookshops (although, alas, I never knew Arthur Symons's Holywell Street), perusing the shelves, always to find some new treasure, some new delight, for it is my fortune that I can never enter a bookshop and retreat empty-handed. And even the most tattered volume assumes its dignity and importance

once it is dusted and placed in its order on my stately shelves.

And, pondering thus, a way came to me. When I am dead my books shall be cleaned and laid out for burial in straight rows in bronze chests made to harbour them. Not one single book is to be kept out. The chests are then to be hermetically sealed and buried in a secret place, which only one shall know, and it may be that I shall sink the chests like another Atlantis, to the bottom of the sea, or they may be hidden in caves, or buried five fathoms deep in the soil, or they may be conveyed across rivers and oceans and continents to the mouth of an extinct volcano and there deposited in the crater, but wherever they are to be placed, only one shall know.

And in several centuries (perhaps, indeed, my chests will escape despoliation for as long a time as the Egyptian tombs, which remained intact for thirty centuries or more) some one, digging, if they be buried in land, will discover my chests. Or if they be buried at sea they may be found by some diver, or perhaps the course of the waters will be altered again and what is wet will then be dry. . . . At any rate my chests will be discovered and pried open and the disappointment of the man who finds them will at first be great, for will

he not expect a treasure? His first thought will be, Surely these heavy chests so carefully sealed contain shivering handfuls of rubies and jade, or crystal goblets, or perhaps they conceal clean yellow gold, or tarnished silver. Metal, surely, perhaps weapons; daggers with rubies and jade set in the handles, or Toledo pistols, or perhaps the garments of the dead. . . . And it would be amusing to put a suit of man's clothes, an ugly sack suit of the period on top of the books to amuse and perplex the fortieth century opener! . . . The books, of course, will at first astound him; then he will feel bitter disappointment, and still later he will brighten with joy. For in the end the veriest dolt of a peasant, the veriest zany of a manufacturer's son, will realize the worth of his discovery. The private and personal library of a gentleman of the twentieth century! he will exclaim, and well he may be delighted, for the period, nay several periods, may be reconstructed from these poor bones. And if he be peasant he will sell his find to some collector and if he be collector he will carry his find to some city and dispose of it on noble shelves builded for the purpose and the books will be the delight of scholar and dilettante for a generation, as they strive to puzzle out the strange words of the twentieth century. For

when my chests are discovered most of the books therein will have disappeared from other collections, even from the libraries, and the titles and names of the authors on the backs will find a new lease of fame, a new and a wiser glory. For who of us can predict which of these books will best please the taste of the fortieth century?

November 30, 1918.

The Folk-Songs of Iowa

"Sobre la base del canto nacional debía construir cada pueblo su sistema."

P. Antonio Eximeno.

The Folk-Songs of Iowa

A romance in the picaresque manner

OF late years considerable energy has been expended by those interested in such matters in the research of the folk-song in America. Stimulated, no doubt, by the example of England, a country which, not so very long ago believed herself folk-songless, but which discovered to her own astonishment that she had as many folk-songs as Sweden or Italy, collectors have ranged over these United States in a desperate effort to capture whatever specimens of the art of the people may still have lingered in these unwelcoming environments. Cecil J. Sharp, indeed, in a trip through the Southern Appalachian mountains, through the states of West Virginia, Kentucky, North and South Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, and Georgia, found this region more profitable for the collection of old English and Scottish folk-songs than their original habitat. For in England only the old sing the songs nowadays, and they only after much persuasion, but in the southern mountains, far from the railroads, the young sing as well as the

old; many of them have large repertories. Even before Cecil Sharp with his unusual scholarship undertook the chase Josephine McGill had collected folk-songs in the Kentucky mountains and Loraine Wyman and Howard Brockway had found their lonesome tunes in the same locality. Frances Densmore collected her Indian folk-songs, published by the Bureau of Ethnology, in Minnesota. Charles F. Lummis gathered a group of cowboy songs. William Francis Allen, Charles Packard Ware, Lucy McKim Garrison, Emily Hallowell, and more recently, Natalie Curtis Burlin and Henry Burleigh, have sought to put down as many of the old Negro folk-songs as possible. Mrs. Burlin, indeed, made the interesting discovery that the Negro folk-songs are polyphonic, sung *à cappela*, and not in unison. One critics, H. E. Krehbiel, inoculated originally, no doubt, by his friend Lafcadio Hearn, has been interested in all manifestations of folk-song. His curiosity regarding the different versions of a certain ballad called *The Jew's Daughter* has almost amounted to a fetish. He has written at various times about Indian and other folk-songs and he has devoted the best of his books to a discussion of the Negro song. It is perhaps unfortunate that his interest has been that of the crabbed collector who pins his

butterflies to boards rather than that of the poet-observer who takes joy in watching the multi-coloured insects, like so many animate figures cut out of glazed chintz, mount into the ether or, with miniature proboscides, suck the nectar from the bending foxglove. Mr. Krehbiel is a von Kölliker [1] rather than a Fabre or a Maeterlinck. . . . Of all these, however, not one, not a single one, has thought of collecting folk-songs in Iowa.

Now there are Indian settlements in Iowa and the Bohemian in his Czech (not his ribald) form settles there in quantities. Dvorak spent a good part of his American visit in Iowa and it is the legend that a large portion of the *Symphony from the New World* was written there. But he could not have heard *Swing low, sweet chariot* and the other Negro tunes he put into this score in this middle western state. I was born in a town in Iowa where at least half the population is of Slavic origin and I was brought up on Bohemian lullabys. When our cook was in good humour she sang lusty Czech airs, redolent of foaming amber Pilzener and stamping booted feet, waving ribboned skirts, embroidered jackets, and elaborately flowered headdresses. In a different mood

[1] In 1842 R. A. von Kölliker described the formation of the blastoderm in the egg of the midge *chironomus*.

she hummed nostalgic melodies, plaintive in their monotony. But the search for the Indian and Bohemian folk-song in Iowa (and I am certain that there is an unlimited field for the collector in this direction) I leave to others; it occurred to me to gather in the folk-songs of the Iowa farmer, the epic of the corn.

There are villages in New England; there are hamlets in England; in Iowa there are cities and towns. Elsewhere these cities would be called towns, and the towns villages or hamlets. . . . In one of the typical cities the wide streets are brick paved, canopied with sweeping elm branches which meet like Gothic ogives overhead; there are rows of old wooden houses and new brick or plaster dwellings, in pseudo-English or colonial style, or, best of all, stately authentic American 1870 mansions and these are surrounded by gardens in which roses, day lilies, gladioli, and bleeding-hearts bloom. The walls of many houses are clothed in purple or white clematis, or wistaria, or more often woodbine or English ivy. Everywhere you will find an attempt at amateur landscape gardening what with here a syringa, there a flaming mountain ash, here a clump of lilac bushes, there a row of blue hydrangeas. All the vegetation is clean-cut, attended to, matter-of-

fact, and the buildings themselves, whether residences or outhouses, give the same impression of prosperity. So do the city parks, that facing the railway station in particular, with the name of the town embroidered in coleus and cockscombs on a sloping bank of well-clipped grass, suggesting a giant's grave. Churches, schools, libraries, theatres, moving picture auditoriums, rise in magnificence on every side. There must be a school for every tenth baby, a church for every third. Unconsciously priapic spires affront the tender sky in every direction. . . . Nor are business blocks lacking, multifloored business blocks with elevators and, slightly removed from the main thoroughfares, factories flaunt their gaunt stacks, factories employing thousands of men. Automobiles, countless automobiles, Fords, Rolls-Royces, and Packards, line the streets along the curbs, buzz along the numbered streets and avenues. I verily believe there are more motor-cars in this Iowa town than there are in Monte Carlo. The very atmosphere spells prosperity, a certain animal comfort, and unfortunately, also, a certain sense of smugness. This then is an Iowa city, not only unlike everything else in the world in its newly painted freshness, its air of up-to-dateness, the greenness of its foliage, and the striking self-

satisfaction of its inhabitants, but also sedulously aping corners in Paris, houses in Oxford, walls in Beaune, gardens at Hampton Court, country clubs at Rye, churches at Siena, farmhouses at Ronda, and banking houses in Chicago. This could be no place for the study of the folk-song. Here one could hear only the music of Irving Berlin or Richard Strauss, Louis A. Hirsch or Puccini. . . .

So one very hot Iowa day — and hot days in Iowa are hotter and brighter than one can meet elsewhere west of Verona or east of Arizona — I set forth from this pleasant city in one of the few buggies which remained of the civilization of the eighties or the nineties, a civilization completely brushed aside by the rude rush of modernity in such a community. There is indeed more of the Rome of the Empire in the Rome of today than there is of the Iowa town of 1870 in the Iowa city of today. A not too loquacious driver lounged on the ample front seat and I sat in the back under the shelter of a black leather canopy. Beside me on the seat I had placed a pile of blank music paper, a tuning fork, and an instrument capable of making phonographic records.

Iowa towns have no suburbs. You pass quickly from the town itself into the farming country, for the towns are built compactly so as not to inter-

fere with the growing of the corn which is the chief occupation of the state. Indeed, for a certain time in the summer, the one concern, the unfailing topic of conversation is the weather, not only in the country but also in the towns. Dry hot weather is essential for the complete growth of the corn and on the complete growth of the corn depends the economic stride of the state. Bank stocks, the price of dry goods and green groceries, rents and dressmakers' bills are all affected by a bad corn year.

The Iowa scene has been infrequently described in literature and no writer, I think, has as yet done justice to it. There is, indeed, a feeling that the Iowa scene is unworthy of description, as it is usually imagined as a fecund but unbeautiful country laid out in flat squares. The contrary is the case. This fair land is unusually personal in its appeal, and its beauty, which may not be appreciated by those who glance at it casually from the back of an observation car on the Overland Limited, is in the end very haunting. Indeed to me the Iowa scene has a kind of picturesqueness which I do not find elsewhere in the United States. Pennsylvania or Connecticut, for instance, too often remind me of England, but Iowa is essentially American. Far from being flat the ground

is constantly rolling so that when, as often happens, the unhindered view exposes only fields of corn in every direction, the light dry wind playing over the green and tasseled stalks in the hot, the very hot sunglare, the effect is produced of the undulation of the waves in a southern sea, and the magnificent monotony of the prospect accentuates the comparison. There is, indeed, to be found in the state of Iowa a kind of inspiration usually only associated with great rivers, high mountains or that mighty monster ocean, " that liest curl'd like a green serpent round about the world."

But there are other pictures which interrupt the corn fields. Brooks abound, bubbling joyously over white-stoned sandy beds, over which bend willow trees . . . and now and then a copse of woods, not a stately Michigan forest but a delightfully brushy congeries of trees and underbrush, an overgrown spinny in which lindens, elms, and the comfortable maple, which later will illumine the landscape with all the hues of a Bakst canvas, rear their modest heights over the heads of hazel shrub and sumac which in turn shelter the milkweed and the prickly thistle. The shade is never intense, the copse is never cool; the warm rays of the sun penetrate the fragile covering of leaves as easily as they would the laced panels of

a sunshade held by a languid English lady on a Maidenhead lawn. Striped chipmunks hustle and bustle through the dead leaves that carpet the sandy soil. Field mice and toads are friendly enemies. There are a few squirrels. Deer, fox, and bears have long since disappeared from a region which offers so little security to the pursued. The settled hum of the cicada becomes a burden in the overheated air at times too terrible to be borne, and then again in the intensity of its rhythm it becomes possible to forget it and to listen to the lesser chirping of the cricket.

The road passes over a wooden bridge, roughly railed; the boards clatter under the untired wheels of the buggy. We lean out to one side and catch a glimmer of silver trout in the stream below, the quick flash of a mammoth dragon fly, darning needle is the local name, a darning needle instinct with gorgeous sheeny sapphire and emerald. Now we are out of the woods and passing through acres of corn land again. . . . There are no rough rail fences in Iowa, no stone fences . . . only barbed wire, extended tautly from post to post. On these shining wires, like so many brazen wire walkers in blue tights, strut the tiny, saucy bluebirds, or they sit in straight rows. Lacking fence wires they seek the telegraph wires. Bronze

grackles, rose-breasted grossbeaks, scarlet tanagers, yellow warblers, and red-winged blackbirds make a vast Manila shawl on the blue ground of the sky. The meadow-lark soars, a hawk swoops low, and a crow calls, Caw! Caw! Caw! The silly mew of the cat-bird assails our ear from the neighbouring bush, the woodpecker taps in the maple tree and the cuckoo's thieving note is sounded.

We pass a workman in the fields. Is this the Iowa peasant? He guides a horse with a harrow through the straight aisles that separate the rows of corn. But he does not sing. He is silent, although occasionally he calls out "Gee up!" to the beast ahead, but he does not interrupt the cheruping of the pretty yellow warblers, the constant burden of the cicadae, the buzz of the locusts, so like the sound of an automobile. The horse neighs. The intense heat, serving as conductor, accentuates this symphony of Nature, brings out the different voices.

But now ahead, over the brow of the hill, I do hear singing. I urge my driver to make speed. He clucks to our horse and the buggy rolls rapidly on. We make the top of the hill and a few steps below its crest a school house is exposed to view. This is the source of the music. The school children are singing, *Good morning, merry sun-*

shine . . . and as we disappear in the distance we hear *My country, 'tis of thee* . . .

The farm in Iowa is not a careless congeries. The yard is not strewn with rusting machinery and rotting wheelbarrows. The farm in Iowa is in its own way as magnificent as the château in France. The house, it is true, is often insignificant, a simple white, clap-boarded structure, with a few shade trees, but the outlying buildings sound the true imperial note. An artesian well or wind-mill, a tower of gleaming steel, imitates the Tour Eiffel; the ample siloes are as imposing in their cylindrical whiteness as the turrets of a robber baron's castle on the Rhine; the barns, the stables, the hog-pens, and the chicken yards are beyond all eastern dreams of country grandeur. Business is abroad. Efficiency is in the land. The Iowa farmer accepts orders over his telephone and delivers them in his motor truck.

Passing such a farm we note several more men silently working in the fields. They greet us soberly. There is no gaiety in the heart of the Iowa farmer. No joy . . . no song! The farmer's wife, a plain slender woman in simple calico, is standing on the porch of her little white house, partially hidden among the evergreen trees. We wave to her, and she waves her hand in return,

although obviously somewhat puzzled over our identity. Then I quickly call to my man to stop and leaping out of my shandrydan into the road I run lightly up the gravel path.

"We don't want to buy nothin'," are the lady's first words; "nothin' at all."

"I don't want to sell nothin', neither," I retort. "Does any one here sing?"

"Be you a music teacher? Or a piano tuner? My darter sings sometimes."

"No, I'm not a teacher. . . . I like music."

The farmer's wife begins to look queer. I see her eyes wander to the spot in the yard where Towser's kennel stands. Towser's head protrudes, a wicked bulldog head. Towser growls tentatively and waits for the signal. I prepare to die . . . but the woman decides to humour my strange request or perhaps she is lonesome.

"Aggie," she calls, "Aggie."

"What is it, ma?" a shrill voice demands from the lima bean patch.

"Come here a minute."

In due time Aggie comes forward, a fat, freckled girl with hair which would be called in a cat show "any other colour." She is dressed in a blue skirt and a red flannel dressing sacque. She carries a

pan of pods in one hand. With the other she fingers the tied ends of a sunbonnet.

"There's a music man here."

"I thought perhaps I could hear some singing. . . . Don't you ever sing among yourselves?"

Aggie giggles. Ma even allows her worried, wrinkled face to break into a slight smile. Towser stops growling.

"Just you sit on the piazza a minute," Aggie suggests. She passes the portal. Ma and I sit down on two uncomfortable wooden chairs. I have forgotten my music paper, my tuning fork, my phonographic apparatus, but it is too late. Aggie touches the keys of an invisible piano; my God, folk-songs are not composed for the piano; has she perhaps misunderstood? Aggie is singing, loudly and unmistakably, Aggie is singing:

"Oh —— ev'ry evening hear him sing,
It's the cutest little thing,
Got the cutest little swing,
Hitchy Koo, Hitchy Koo, Hitchy Koo . . ."

"Very pretty," I gasp. "Very pretty."

"Come on in the parlour," Ma says.

We go into a low ceilinged room, with framed

pictures from the Sunday supplements of the Chicago newspapers. High in the wall in one corner is the tin stopper of the stove-pipe hole. Stove and pipe have disappeared for the summer. The furniture is early Grand Rapids, a trifle worn; the carpet is red and green ingrain. The piano is black and upright. Aggie is fumbling in a music cabinet. Presently she goes back to the piano and begins again:

"From the land of the sky bloo waaa — tur . . ."

Aggie's third choice is even more inspired:

"Pale haaands that float beside the . . ."

So do I discover a bond between Iowa and Mayfair! Did Cecil Sharp learn more in his Appalachian travels? I doubt it. I thank Aggie, I thank Ma, I even speak to Towser as I pass the kennel and hurry on to the buggy. I wake up my Sancho Panza, snoozing on the front seat and we once more are underway.

More corn fields, more copses, more birds and butterflies, more stern and sober workers, occasionally an automobile passes us, occasionally a wagon loaded with crates of vegetables or chickens. A new sight is a duck yard. Hundreds of white birds, huddled in pens with stretches of water

like canals in Holland. In the next corn field a quaint scarecrow, clothed in blue overalls and a long frock coat. On his head a sombrero tied with a gay red bandana.

An hour later we drive up to another farm house to give our Rozinante food and water. Our companion on the front seat drives the steed to the stables. I enter the farmhouse kitchen where the gaunt housewife prepares the mid-day meal, dinner, it is called in Iowa. She nods a curt good day and answers my request for dinner in the affirmative. I have become more circumspect. Tea stands on the stove stewing; tea is always stewed in Iowa; black and strong it stews in the kettle. Sometimes the kettle with its strong black residue stands for days unmolested at the back of the stove, save for the pouring out of cupfuls of the liquid and the replenishing of water and green tea leaves. Steaks cut as thin as sandwiches in Mayfair are frying. Grilling is an unknown art in these regions. Vegetables are boiling in pots of milk. Watch the patient housewife as she cuts the long and splendid asparagus stalks into minute bits which she tosses dexterously into the boiling kettle. A great green head of lettuce fresh from the garden is thrown into the wooden chopping bowl and soon reduced to atoms which are pres-

ently drowned in vinegar. But during all these operations and the preparing of griddle cakes, buckwheat griddle cakes, there is no singing, except that furnished by the tea-kettle, nor is there much conversation, although two women are assisting the housewife. The women bustle about but they do not talk. The farm hands come in and eat from the heavily laden unclothed table. Food is shoveled into the mouth without respite but still the tongues do not speak. Only occasionally some one asks a question, which is usually replied to monosyllabically. Dinner over I tremblingly ask for a song.

"Song," says the farmer. "We haven't got no time for songs."

A maidservant titters. So does my Sancho.

"I guess the city feller's crazy," I hear a husky whisper from the corner.

The farm hands file out. I thank the housewife and attempt to pay the reckoning but she waves away the money.

"We don't take no boarders," she says, "but strangers is always welcome, leastwise if there ain't too many of us eatin'. We can't take 'em in at harvest time."

Sancho puts the steed back into the traces. The buggy starts, leaps forward into the road and

soon we have left the farmhouse far behind. . . . The sun is lowering, the shadows fall long. Sancho leans back confidentially.

"Say, feller," speaks our squire; "say, feller, if you want ter hear some singin' there's a farmer over here that's got a religion bug. Most every day after dinner somebody's singin' hymns for an hour. *Onward, Christian Soldiers, At the Cross,* and all those."

I smile feebly and shake my head. Why is it that Natalie Burlin, Loraine Wyman, Frances Densmore, and Cecil Sharp can go out in the morning and return at night with a bundle of songs in Mixolydian, Dorian, and Æolian modes? Reluctantly I give the signal to proceed back to the city. I remember that once in Shoreditch I had a similar experience. Seeking the cheapest of the music halls, I entered to find myself surrounded by cockneys so bebuttoned that they seemed to have ransacked all the button factories, the females so befeathered that all the bedraggled plumes in the world seemed to have been collected in that house. At last, I muttered to myself, I will hear a good racy Cockney comic song. The lights went low; a white screen replaced the drop curtain. . . . It was before the days of moving pictures; the evidence pointed to an illustrated

song. A scrawny female in a dirty pink satin dress walked out. "Tike me 'ome to owld New 'Ampshire, mother dear," were her very words. The picture on the screen was Times Square by moonlight.

The tongues of the farmers had been still; even the farmers' wives had been comparatively silent. They had not worked in the corn fields to the accompaniment of some broad sweeping rhythm; I had not heard the suggestion of a pentatonic scale. . . . But as we drove back in silence through this splendid region it came to me that Iowa has her own folk-songs. The melody of the yellow warbler, the soft low call of the brown thrasher, the entrancing aspirational cry of the meadow lark mounting to heaven, the whippoorwill shouting his own name, the caw of the crow, the tap, tap, tap, of the red-headed woodpecker, the shrill raucous shout of the magisterial and quarrelsome bluejay, the heart-breaking dirge-like moan of the mourning dove, the memory of all these reminded me that Iowa has her folk-songs, but the corn itself, the unserried ranks of green tassel-bearing stalks growing, almost visibly growing, in the hot cicada-burdened atmosphere, sings, it seems to me, the noblest song of all. The corn song, beginning, no doubt, if one could

transcribe its runic accents into our rude Iowa English, "I am the corn!" a noble line, a magnificent refrain which is repeated as far as the eye and ear can reach.

I Am the Corn! is the folk-song of Iowa and can it be said that any other state or nation has produced a better song?

December 19, 1918.

Isaac Albéniz

" That's a brave god, and bearest celestial liquor: I will kneel to him."

CALIBAN.

Isaac Albéniz

I

SINCE the days when, so the legend has it, Guido d'Arezzo improved the monochord, through the lifetime of the virginal, the clavicytherium, the harpsichord, the clavichord, and the spinet, the invention of the pianoforte by Cristofori, to that more modern period of Bechstein, Broadwood, Pleyel, Steinway, Chickering, and Knabe, composers for these stringed instruments of the same family have sought inspiration in the folk-dance. Pavans and galliards abound in the music of the old English virginalists. Henry Purcell often chose such titles as chacone, corant, jig, minuet, rigadoon, march, and hornpipe. Couperin's fancifully named pieces, among which I might mention *La Prude*, *La Séduisante*, and *Le Bavolet Flottant*, are really dances; some of them he has frankly labelled gavotte, gigue, and menuet. The sonata form, of course, is based on these old suites of dance tunes and some of the titles of movements in the sonatas of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, scherzo, menuet, and rondo, bear witness to this fact. Schubert wrote

polonaises and rondos and many of Schumann's melodies move gracefully to dance rhythms. Chopin's profession of faith was made to the Muse Terpsichore. He wrote the proudest polonaises, the most majestic of mazurkas, waltzes which Schumann refused to play for dancers unless half the women were countesses! What are Liszt's *Rhapsodies* but gipsy dances, arrangements of the Czardas form in which the dancer by signalling the orchestra dances faster or more slowly at will?

It is not therefore an innovation for the modern Spanish composers, who seem to be busy founding a school, to seek inspiration in dance forms, but there is perhaps a more logical reason for their doing so than can be instanced in the examples I have cited, for the dance is assuredly the national musical form of Spain, where singing, most often, serves as part of the accompaniment to waving arms and tapping feet. The founder [1] of this modern school of Spanish composition, at least so far as the pianoforte is concerned, was Isaac Albéniz, who, like Liszt and Rubinstein, made a great name for himself as a virtuoso, and who left

[1] Of course no one actually "founds" anything. What I mean to say is that, to a certain extent, the *Iberia* of Albéniz is the modern Spanish composer's Bible. But *Iberia,* which finally bloomed in France, grew from Spanish seed. Felipe Pedrell, who still lives, possibly gave it to Albéniz.

behind him besides several hundred pieces for the piano, several operas and zarzuelas, and a good-sized pile of orchestral and chamber music. During his life time Albéniz was certainly not considered as a composer of the first rank, although it cannot be said that he lacked for appreciation of a kind, and even since his death there has been but a vague attempt made to classify his work and to rate him as he deserves to be rated.[1] It is be-

[1] The musical dictionaries are not very fortunate in their references to Albéniz. In the last edition of Grove a short, inadequate paragraph is allotted to him; the added notes in the appendix are inaccurate. The third edition of Baker's Dictionary, a work on a much smaller scale, gives him a little more space. Riemann, too, is more generous, but neither of these accounts is illuminating or sufficiently informing. More is to be found in Espasa's Spanish Encyclopedia, but the volume containing Albéniz's biography was published before his death.

Pedrell has a fine paper on Albéniz in his book, "Músicos contemporáneos y otros tiempos." G. Jean-Aubry's "Isaac Albéniz" in the "Musical Times" (London; December 1, 1917) is interesting from a biographical point of view. F. Forster Buffen, in his "Musical Celebrities," second series (London; Chapman and Hall, 1893), gives a picture of the virtuoso at the height of his London career. H. J. Storer's "Isaac Albéniz" in "The Musician" (Boston; May 29, 1916) is not very important. Hermann Klein writes of Albéniz's opera, *Pepita Jiménez,* in the "Musical Times" (London; March 1, 1918) and Ernest Newman has a paper on the opera *Merlin,* in "The New Witness" (London; September 20, 1917), but by far the best attempt yet made to classify his work is Joseph de Marliave's essay in his book, "Études Musicales" (Paris; 1917). It will readily

ginning to be bruited about, however, that here is a fine example of the national composer, like Moussorgsky or Chopin, and it is occasionally whispered, although as yet in very hushed voices, that he has written a series of pieces which add to the clang-tints and technique of the piano, and which for emotional content, nervous rhythm, and descriptive power may be set beside only the very great works composed for that instrument.

These pieces are called collectively *Iberia* and were written shortly before Albéniz's death, after a course of study with Vincent d'Indy (it may be said of this composer that he was studying all his life; the list of his professors reads like the faculty pages in the catalogue of a large university). The twelve pieces to which he has given this generic title will successfully preserve his name against the erasures of Time. They are more and more becoming an essential part of the slowly growing repertory of concert pianists and there is reason to believe that they form a link in that chain which began with Bach, was carried on through Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Schumann, Schubert, Chopin, Liszt, and Brahms, and which at the present day includes beyond question Debussy

be apparent that all of these articles lie out of the reach of the general reader.

and Ravel, and possibly Schoenberg and Ornstein, although that remains to be proved. *Iberia*, then, is not only the best piano music which has come out of Spain (other composers have surpassed Albéniz in the composition of songs, orchestral pieces, operas, and zarzuelas) but also music which I am inclined to believe may be placed side by side with the best music written for the piano anywhere.

II

The story of Albéniz's career has a picaresque flavour which is truly Spanish. Artist-Spaniards, it would seem, never stay at home, or if they do they embark on wild and extravagant adventures. The life of Cervantes reads like a romance, and Cervantes, perhaps, had the typical Spanish temperament. The novelist, Alarcón, was a soldier and man of the world. Blasco Ibañez is a politician and revolutionist. It is said that he has been in jail thirty times. Some Spanish composers, like Victoria, have gone to Rome; others, like de Falla and Usandizaga have gone to Paris. Albéniz went everywhere, even to America. He was born on May 29, 1860 [1] at Camprodón, prov-

[1] There is some dispute about this date. Grove's Dictionary, Baker's Dictionary, and H. J. Storer give it as

ince of Gerona, one of five children of Angel and Dolores Albéniz. Soon after his birth events so shaped themselves that his father found it necessary to carry him, wrapped in a cloak, on a very stormy night to a nurse capable of satisfying his enormous appetite, which did not diminish as he grew older. His father was a government official at Barcelona; neither of his parents was musical, but his eldest sister played the piano, and young Isaac listened to her with such delight that she began to teach him to play while he was yet a baby. He gave his first recital at the Roméa Theatre in Barcelona at the age of four,[1] and played so well that the audience seemed to have suspected a trick, a figure hidden behind a screen or some such contrivance! Later his mother took him and his sister to Paris where they studied with Antoine-François Marmontel. The boy soon conceived the ambition of competing for a conservatory prize and he actually did so at the age of a little more than six! After he had finished playing he rose from the stool, drew a hard

1861, and so do I in "The Music of Spain." Espasa, Riemann, and G. Jean-Aubry give 1860.

[1] Buffen says that this appearance was made at the age of seven, after his return from Paris. He played Dussek's sonata, *Les Adieux*, and the last movement of Weber's *Concertstück* in F minor.

rubber ball from his pocket, and hurled it with all his force at one of the large mirrors in the room, which was shattered into bits. This mad juvenile prank, a foreshadowing of his later fantastic exuberance, his love of jokes and gaiety, qualities which fight with rich emotion and deep sentiment for precedence in his music, locked the doors of the conservatory to him for two years.

He returned to Spain in 1868 and began to study at the Conservatory of Madrid, whence his family had removed from Barcelona. It is probable that his teacher at this period was Ajero y Mendizábal. A year later he ran away from home but, with the good fortune which usually attended his movements, he met the Alcalde of Escorial who was so amused and impressed by the boy that he arranged a concert for him at the Escorial Casino. Isaac's playing on this occasion made something of a sensation. Now the good Alcalde sent him home but Isaac, having gold in his purse, the proceeds of the concert, quit the train at Villalba and took one going in the opposite direction, giving concerts at Avila, Zamora, and Salamanca. Then a whim urged him to return home and he would have done so but he was set upon by bandits and robbed of his savings. So for two or three years, *el niño* Albéniz, as it was the custom to call him at

this epoch, wandered over Spain giving concerts. Finally he did return to his father's house, only to run away again, however, this time to Cadiz. From this port he embarked as a stowaway on a vessel bound for Porto Rico. This must have been about 1872 when Isaac was eleven or twelve years old. Soon after embarkation he was discovered (probably his appetite drove him from his hiding place) but he gave concerts on board and his playing and his very considerable amount of charm made him so popular that he left the ship with a sheaf of letters of introduction from influential passengers. He gave more concerts in Porto Rico and then came to the United States where he was often without funds and, indeed, suffered great privations, but he met with some success, particularly in San Francisco.

His father had been making business trips through various places in South and Central America during the winter of 1873. Visiting Havana, he was surprised to see a concert announced by his son. He attended this concert, a reconciliation took place, and it was arranged that the boy should go to Germany for further study, on the proceeds of what money he had made during his American tour. He sailed for England and G. Jean-Aubry says that he gave concerts in Liver-

pool and London; his London friends seem to think he made his first appearance there in 1889. Be that as it may he went on to Leipsic and studied piano with Salomon Jadassohn and composition with Carl Reinecke. Again he ran out of money. He applied to his father for aid which was refused but in 1876 he returned to Madrid and sought an audience with the King (Alfonso XII) himself, who granted him a pension, sufficient for his immediate needs. Young Isaac now left for Brussels where he studied harmony with Joseph Dupont, counterpart and fugue with H. F. Kufferath, composition with François Gevaërt, and piano with Louis Brassin. Brassin, who was painter as well as musician, afterwards said that his brushes flew faster if he could get Albéniz to play for him. The financial results of a concert at Brussels enabled him to carry out a long cherished ambition, to study with Franz Liszt. About 1877 he left for Weimar. Biographers of Liszt have seemingly omitted to be impressed by this incident. There is little record of the two years Albéniz spent with Liszt, but it is known that the pupil followed the master to Rome and later to Buda-Pesth.

Albéniz had already had many masters; he was destined to have more and this fact seems open to

some misconception. Pedrell asserts that as a composer he was largely an autodidact. "Artistic temperaments like his are not teachable," he continues. "They carry their destiny within themselves. One can only guide them to prevent their wasting the flow of their inspiration. Dry, hard, cold rules only upset them." Pedrell says that the lessons he gave Albéniz were in reality only "half-humorous colloquies between two friends. We talked about music, good and bad taste, etc. There was no hint of pedagogy."

He appears to have been a very fine pianist with unique gifts and a special style. "He was," says Joseph de Marliave, "without show, virtuosoism, or pose, a dazzling pianist, a male, vigorous, magnificently passionate pianist, judicious in his interpretation, profoundly artistic and comprehensive." Pedrell says, "I heard Rubinstein plays his works for a roomful of friends, but I did not feel the cold shiver which went through me when Albéniz performed his own works for us with a fire which, as can be easily understood, drove the London public mad." And this from one of the London critics, "He is one of the best pianists we have heard since Liszt. He reminds us of Rubinstein in his delicacy and Hans von

Bülow in his vigour." He was especially effective in the performance of his own works.

In 1880 Albéniz began a series of triumphal piano tours through Cuba, Mexico, the Argentine Republic, and Spain itself. Then he became manager of a zarzuela company which was most unsuccessful. To recoup his losses he began another concert tour. In 1883 he married Rosina Jordana, who bore him two daughters and a son. In 1884 he was made "court pianist." After his marriage he had hoped to settle down in Barcelona but money troubles drove him forth again on another inevitable concert tour. This persistent crying need of money seems to have harassed Albéniz like the sting of a whip. At one time he actually carried a piece of music every day to a Madrid publisher, from whom he received enough silver in return to pay for the day's meals. It may be judged whether or not this had any effect on the quality of his early work. Yet the inscription on the reverse side of the medal informs us that this was the very incentive needed to keep his music from being precious. And so, even at the last, he was able to breathe great spontaneity and freshness into his *Iberia*, which gives no external evidence of calculation and studied effect. . . .

He again returned to Spain and now lived in Madrid until 1889 when he made a concert tour of Germany, Holland, and Scotland, and finally went to London where he was heard at Lady Morell Mackenzie's. He played on this occasion Schubert's Impromptu in E flat and several pieces of his own and made such a success that he soon afterward gave a public concert at Albert Hall.[1]

London now claimed him for several years but did not put his genius to any good use. Owing to the success which greeted the incidental music he had composed for a play by Armande Sylvestre he was commissioned to write the music for an operetta called *The Magic Opal*, performed at the Lyric Theatre, January 19, 1893 (Madrid, 1894), and later at the Prince of Wales. It was in this same year that he decided to forsake the career of virtuoso for that of composer and he gave his last piano recital in Berlin in 1893. Following the production of *The Magic Opal* he was engaged as composer in ordinary and conductor at the Prince of Wales Theatre. It was probably during this time that his health became seriously undermined as he certainly overworked himself, often finding

[1] Buffen says it was Princes' Hall, and he gives the date as June 12, 1889.

it necessary to compose at the theatre where copyists seized the sheets as they fell from his hands. He wrote and produced three more operas, *Enrico Clifford* (produced in Italian at the Liceo at Barcelona, May 8, 1895), *Antonio de la Florida* (Madrid, October 26, 1894; produced in Brussels as *l'Ermitage fleurie*, 1904), and *Pepita Jiménez* (Barcelona, January 5, 1896). Before his death he worked on a *King Arthur* trilogy; the first part, *Merlin*, he completed and it has, I think, been published. I am uncertain as to the state in which he left *Lancelot* and *Ginevra*. Up to a comparatively recent date this work, in whole or in part, had not been given on the stage.

It was in the early nineties that Albéniz went to Paris to study and there he found the inspiration he needed to guide him through the mazes of his future masterpieces. Mr. Jean-Aubry tells us how fertile the ground was: "It was but three years before, in Paris, that Franck had died, and more recently, Lalo, in 1892, while poor Chabrier, in 1894, stricken with illness and almost unconscious at the first performance of *Gwendoline*, was shortly afterwards also to die. But in 1893 Fauré had just completed *La Bonne Chanson;* the first eight songs by Duparc were shortly to be published; d'Indy was writing *Fervaal;* Chausson had

finished his symphony and was working on the quartet and the *Poème* for violin and orchestra; Charpentier had recently published his *Impressions d'Italie;* Debussy had had his quartet performed and had begun *Pelléas et Mélisande;* and Bordes had founded in 1892 the Chanteurs de Saint Gervais and with Vincent d'Indy laid the foundation for the Schola Cantorum. Is there in the history of French music a period richer in fulfilment and in promise?" From this time on, indeed, Albéniz walked among the great. His finest work for orchestra, *Catalonia*, was written in 1898 and performed by the Societé Nationale in Paris, May 27, 1899. In January, 1900, it was played by the Colonne Orchestra.

But overwork, worry, the strain of a crowded career had told on him. In 1900 he fell ill. He returned to Spain where his health improved and he now began to work slowly on his *King Arthur*, but found he could not overtax his failing strength. As he became worse he was taken to Nice and it was there, ill himself, his wife also ill, his daughter at the point of death, that he wrote the book for pianoforte which bears the proud title, *Iberia*, a book of memories of his beloved Spain. He lived to complete this work and, indeed, almost finished two more pieces, but he never regained his

strength and he died at Cambo, on the Franco-Spanish border May 25, 1909.

G. Jean-Aubry knew the man and gives us his portrait: "He who met Albéniz, were it but once, would remember him to his dying day. At first his effusiveness could surprise, yes even displease, but soon one felt that a living fire inspired all his gestures, and that the great soul of the man dominated his outward frame; and to astonishment would succeed an affection which nothing could alter. I do not think it possible for any other personality to show such singular harmony between head and heart. His eager intelligence never outran his feverish love of life and things. On each one of the few — far too few — occasions I saw him he revealed to me some phase of personality that endeared him to me. He was one of the first to give me an estimate of the young Spanish school, and in what glowing terms he spoke of the love he bore the musicians of France.

"The kindness and the generosity of the man were unsurpassable; I could give a thousand proofs. He was sensitive without wishing it to appear, and the goodness of his heart was a thing of much charm. He was unstinting in his praise of others; his talk was always of friendship, affection, or joy. I never saw him otherwise. He

steeped himself in music as the source of all strength, but nothing in life itself escaped him, and behind his joyous exterior vibrated a heart responsive to the least modulation of the soul. We find it in all his work. What man can take the place of this marvellous fount of vitality; as for myself, I have never known in another such joy at being happy. Even at the gates of death he retained this joyous boyishness. In Brussels I heard tales of a thousand pleasant adventures of which he was the soul; jests, planned with much skill, which the grave Gevaërt himself did not escape. He enjoyed himself with juvenile gaiety, and the victims of his jests only loved him the more for them. One would have forgiven him anything, for one was always his debtor.

"It was wonderful to see Albéniz at the pianoforte, playing his own pieces in the last years of his life. The virtuoso of former days had lost his cunning, his fingers were not equal to the difficulties, and we were given the spectacle of Albéniz singing, stamping with his foot, talking, making up with looks and laughter the notes his fingers could not play. Dear Albéniz! what performances of *Iberia* will ever have for us the charm of these, when all your poet's soul passed into those chords, that singing, that laughter!"

III

As a composer Albéniz was very prolific; he was, by the way, an excellent improviser and it is said that Liszt took an especial enjoyment in this form of his talent. No complete, or even semi-complete, catalogue of his music has yet been made. It may, however, be stated, with comparative safety, that he wrote altogether between five and six hundred pieces; perhaps two hundred of these are temporarily lost. They were published everywhere, Spain, Germany (Breitkopf and Härtel), England, France, even America. Probably the greater number were published by the Casa Dotésio at Barcelona and Diaz at San Sebastián.

It has become the fashion for musical dictionaries, casual essayists, and even concert pianists, to speak slightingly of his youthful work, but it is possible, indeed, probable that this perhaps superficial opinion will soon be reversed. Jean-Aubry says, "I do not like the opinion of those who set too little store by this early output in order to esteem only the latter. In the middle of the music in his first manner will appear suddenly in many places an unexpected intonation in the turning of a facile phrase. One is conscious not so much of

hasty workmanship as of too great a facility; but in all that he produced, what joy of life, and still more what voluptuous beauty!" Marliave, for whom the composer in his last days at Nice played as many of these early pieces as he could recall, found many of them very beautiful. "Everything is interesting," he writes. "These are impressions hastily sketched on paper, short sketches produced instinctively, assuredly more valuable as invention than as finished work, but which denote a marvellous facility and at the same time a most subtle and most musical sentiment." And here is Ernest Newman's dictum, "Most of his minor piano pieces, I should think, were the potboilers of a man who, even when he was writing a potboiler, could not forget that he was an artist."

Nature awoke artistic sensations in Albéniz. Spain and its landscapes were an inexhaustible source of inspiration to him. More than half his pieces bear the name of some village or region, pieces composed from day to day and dedicated to the town he was playing in. Often, it is true, the insufficience, even the absence of art, makes itself felt. The sentiment of these pieces, too, is frankly popular, but the themes are personal to the composer. At times, however, he has

so breathed the spirit of a region into his music that it has vied in popularity with the folk-songs of the place. Spaniards, indeed, usually prefer this early music to the *Iberia*, which they assert, is more French than Spanish. Ernest Newman, who scoffs at the theory of nationalism in music, offers Albéniz's operas in evidence to prove that he was not a nationalist composer. But his operas have never been successful on the stage. Assuredly his piano music is nationalistic in the best sense, as the titles themselves will plainly show was his intention. But, of course, Albéniz owes something of his form to the modern Frenchmen and Russians.

The list of these early pieces is formidable in its length. Perhaps the two most popular numbers are an *Orientale* and the *Sérénade Espagnole.* Marliave describes the latter as possessing "marvellous local colour." Albéniz, himself, preferred his *Seis pequeños valses de salón.* The *Tango* in D is striking, and crosses some pretty stiles, despite its brevity. The *Spanish Suite* embraces impressions of Cuba, Granada, Seville, Cadiz, Asturia, Aragon, Castile, and Catalonia. Another suite of "characteristic pieces" includes *Gavotte, Minuetto á Silvya, Barcarola, Plegaria, Conchita, Pilar, Zambra, Pavana, Polonesa, Ma-*

zurka, *Staccato*, and *Torre Bermeja*. There are at least five sonatas.[1] There is a book called *Souvenirs de Voyage* which includes *En el mar*, *Leyenda*, *Alborada*, *En la Alhambra*, *Puerta de Tierra*, *Rumores de la Caleta*, and *En la Playa*. There are other dances, *Jota Aragonesa*, *Bolero* (Andalusia), *Sevillanas*, etc. There are other pictures of places, *Córdoba*, *Burgos*, *Mallorca*, etc. There is a *Spanish Rhapsody* for two pianos, and two concertos, one a *Concerto Fantástico*. There is a *Zambra-Granadina*, in which Marliave asserts one can hear the " tuning of guitars under an oriental breeze."

The songs are not numerous, nor are they very well known. I have never seen nor heard any of them. Nevertheless he composed several to French, English, and Catalan words. Francis Money-Coutts supplied the verses for some of these; there is a book of *Rimas*, by Bécquer, and at least one of the songs is by Pierre Loti.

All his ideas, Marliave tells us, were *thought* for the piano. That explains the relative weakness of his orchestral music. But the same general statement might be made of Chopin and Schumann; still one continues to hear the Chopin concertos and the Schumann symphonies. Albéniz

[1] Buffen says there are twelve.

was not ignorant of his comparative weakness in this direction. For the *Spanish Rhapsody* mentioned above, for example, he wrote only an accompaniment for second piano, although he had originally planned the work for piano and orchestra. The second piano part, however, was orchestrated in 1911 by Enesco. Buffen mentions a symphony in A and Espasa lists under orchestral works, a *Suite, Scherzo, Serenata morisca y capricho cubana. Catalonia* may be regarded as his one fine work for orchestra. Marliave says it is as good as Chabrier's *España.* Praise could go no farther. It has been performed in Paris and London, but although I have been shrieking for its New York performance for a number of years conductors remain deaf to its and my blandishments. None of Albéniz's orchestral music has been performed in New York as yet, so far as I am aware. . . . Chamber music was assuredly not Albéniz's forte; his only published effort in this direction is the Trio in F for violin, 'cello, and piano. Albéniz could not bear even the mention of this work. His inspiration forsook him when he tampered with classical or academic forms. . . . I cannot find any enthusiasm expressed for his oratorio, *El Cristo.*

His operas, however, have adherents, one no less

a personage than the vivid Ernest Newman. *The Magic Opal* and *San Antonio de la Florida* have as yet found no distinguished friends. *Enrico Clifford,* a conventional work, a melodramatic episode from the wars of the roses, sung and published in Italian, was, I believe, a complete failure. *Pepita Jiménez* was his first success in the operatic line and it was the last opera of his to be produced. Edmund Gosse says of Valera's novel, on which the work is founded, " This book still remains, after a quarter of a century, and after the large development of fiction in Spain, the principal, the typical Spanish novel of our day. . . . ' Pepita Jiménez ' is Spain itself in a microcosm — Spain with its fervour, its sensual piety, its rhetoric and hyperbole, its superficial passion, its mysticism, its graceful extravagance. The story may be summarized as that of a theological student, full of ancient Catholic fervour, training to be a missionary, delivered, all unarmed, to the wiles of a young, innocent, and beautiful woman." The conflict is not alone between religion and passion, for Don Luis's father is also a suitor for the young widow's hand, and father and son are therefore rivals. Hermann Klein, who heard the first performance, finds this opera delightful, bubbling over with charming music, which he admits, how-

ever, is not particularly Spanish. Is not this perhaps the principal reason for the neglect of Albéniz's operas, that they lack provincial colour, the colour he lavished so bountifully on his piano music? *Pepita*, however, has been produced in Prague, Karlsruhe, Leipsic, Brussels, and probably elsewhere.

Another very good reason for the comparative failure of these operas is the nature of the librettos prepared for him by Francis B. Money-Coutts (now Lord Latymer). These (and I include the *King Arthur*) are very wretched affairs, the equal, it would seem, of some of our American efforts in that line. It is not necessary to discuss this point at length; I simply offer in evidence a sample (I copied the first page that flipped open from the published text of *Pepita* in Breitkopf and Härtel's piano score):

> "All is ready! All is ready!
> All is weariness!
> Waiting the steady stirring of cheeriness!
> Love with his madness
> Turns all to sadness!"

In September, 1917, *Nivian's Dance* from *Merlin* was played at a Queen's Hall Promenade Concert in London and moved Ernest Newman to the

following outburst: "The music is . . . no more 'Spanish,' no more a 'mirror of nationality' than if it had been written by an Englishman, a Frenchman, or a Choctaw; it is simply music, and very good music — the finest on the whole that Albéniz ever wrote. . . . I warmly recommend the score to any one who is on the look-out for something at once original, strong, and beautiful, and who can chuckle with me over the fact that the best opera on our sacrosanct British legend has been written by a Spaniard."

Marliave does not share Newman's enthusiasm for this work. He considers the *King Arthur* a mistake in judgment: "a Wagnerian libretto in situation, sentiment, and characters, the last thing to propose to his inspiration. The concentrated psychic force that such a work demanded was not in him; as a consequence he lost his own personality in that of the German colossus."

Albéniz seems to have been at work on this trilogy from 1897 to 1906. His other operas are crowded into a few years in the early nineties. Aside from these he wrote several zarzuelas, just how many it is hard to determine. I doubt if they all have been published. Espasa gives the names of three, *Cuanto más viejo*, *Catalanes de Gracia*, and *El Canto de Salvación*.

Whatever private opinions may be held regarding the ultimate value of his operas, the fact remains that none of them has held the stage. The *King Arthur* trilogy has not even been produced. And neither his operas, his early piano music (which, however, must not be unappreciated on this account), his songs, nor his orchestral music would give him a very high place in the history of music. That he achieved that place before he died is due to *Iberia*.

Marliave says that *Véga* (from the *Alhambra Suite*) belongs to his transition period; it is connected with his past and yet it foreshadows his future. This is a long poetic nocturne in which he evoked the spirit of the plain of Granada, lying tranquil under the high stars, sleeping to the murmur of brooks and to the soft sweep of the breeze over the gardens and groves of blooming orange trees.

Albéniz began *Iberia* in 1905. It is published in four books by the " Edition mutuelle " in Paris. The contents are: Book I, *Evocation, El Puerto, Fête-Dieu à Seville;* Book II, *Rondeña, Almeria, Triana;* Book III, *El Albaicin, El Polo, Lavapies;* Book IV, *Malaga, Jerez, Eritaña.* These pieces, without exception, are all masterpieces of pianoforte literature. More, they are the corner stone,

the Koran, of the modern Spanish school. They are the dances and songs, the sights and sounds of the peninsula, translated with peculiar felicity into the language of the piano which Albéniz has even successfully extended for his purposes. In rhythm, in emotion, in harmony, in themal content, and in their polyphonic complexity (which sounds simple when well played as all good music should), they are almost unique. They far transcend in importance any other modern works for the piano. Indeed they place Albéniz in very blessed company, with Beethoven, Chopin, and Schumann.

Havelock Ellis says in "The Soul of Spain," "It has been said that a Spaniard resembles the child of a European father by an Abyssinian mother." There is certainly a wild African strain in Albéniz's European music. Marliave detects therein the two essences of Iberian music, one vigorous, hardy, passionate, the *jota*, the other dreamy, sensual, languid, the *malagueña*. "You cannot walk through a little town in the south of Spain without hearing a strange sound, between crying and chanting, which wanders out to you from behind barred windows and from among the tinkling bells of the mules," writes Arthur Symons in "Cities and Sea-Coasts and Islands." "The

Malagueña, they call this kind of singing; but it has no more to do with Malaga than the mosque at Cordova has to do with the soil on which it stands. It is as Eastern as the music of tom-toms and gongs, and, like Eastern music, it is music before rhythm, music which comes down to us untouched by the invention of the modern scale, from an antiquity out of which plain-chant is a first step towards modern harmony. And this Moorish music is, like Moorish architecture, an arabesque. It avoids definite form just as the lines in stone avoid definite form, it has the same endlessness, motion without beginning or end, turning upon itself in a kind of infinitely varied monotony. The fioriture of the voice are like those coils which often spring from a central point of ornament, to twist outward, as in a particular piece of very delicate work in the first mihrab in the mosque at Cordova. . . . The passion of this music is like no other passion; fierce, immoderate, sustained, it is like the crying of a wild beast in suffering, and it thrills one precisely because it seems to be so far from humanity, so inexplicable, so deeply rooted in the animal of which we are but one species."

The *Evocation* as the name implies, gives us the mood; "bright burning daylight beating down upon the rows of white houses, a blaze of heat over

it all; then in the evening the fragrance of orange blooms arises from the gardens and the thrum of merriment is heard in the streets through long and sleepless nights";[1] citron trees, myrtle hedges, rows of acacias, tamarisks and pomegranites; *véga* and *sierra;* we peep through the iron bars of a gate into a *patio;* we inhale the fragrance of jasmine blown across to us through the heavy night air; a serenade is heard in the distance, the faint tinkle of guitars; this is the Spanish Invitation to the Dance! . . . *Triana:* the gipsy quarter of Seville; we are in a *maison de danses;* a gipsy girl is dancing the *romalis,* coiling, stamping, now slowly sensuous, now fast and fiery; crotals, cymbals, castanets, tambourines . . . spangles flashing . . . stamping heels . . . *accroche-cœurs.* . . . And a certain savage dignity reminds us that Trajan was born in Triana! . . . *El Albaicin:* the gipsy quarter at Granada; guitars, strumming, thumping . . . an old gipsy woman sings a plaintive melody . . . interrupted by the guitars . . . nostalgia . . . *wanderlust* . . . wildness and woe . . . the dirty, gipsy huts, poverty, the life of the Bohemians . . . *Rondeña,* in which 3–4 and 6–8 time alternate in the graceful and peculiar dance of Ronda, the town built high on a cleft rock, in

[1] John Garrett Underhill.

turn invaded by Phœnicians, Carthaginians, Goths, Moors, and Christians . . . the market rich in fruit, grapes, peaches, medlars . . . a famous bull-ring . . . *El Puerto:* the mountain portal from which the robber bands were formerly accustomed to descend and infest the high road from Seville to Cadiz. . . . The rhythm runs in the quick decisive trot of mules . . . *El Polo:* the sobbing strain of an old Andalusian song, " speaking directly to the spine, sending an unaccountable shiver through one " . . . *Eritaña:* an inn outside Seville. Can this be Lillas Pastia's? Marliave says that this music " waddles, good-humoured and joking, like Sancho Panza's donkey approaching the rack of a Sevillan inn." And to Marliave the culminating point in the series is *Jerez,* a picture of the city of sherry, " an absolute masterpiece of pure musical beauty." I would find it difficult to pick my own favourite. Indeed it is usually, as is the case with Gilbert and Sullivan operas, the latest one I have heard.

Only very brilliant pianists need attempt to play these pieces. Indeed, to master their depths requires an astonishing technique, for this technique must be forgotten by the auditor in performance. Ernest Newman has made some remarks on this point: " Albéniz, I think, sometimes makes

matters needlessly difficult for the player by his way of notating his music. He has always had a preference for the flat keys, particularly those with five, six, or seven flats in the key signature (the bulk of the pieces in *Iberia,* for instance, are in flats); and not content with this he is for ever doubling the flats, or doubling some and chromatically raising others in the same chord, till the most skilled reader may be pardoned for getting confused at times, while the ordinary amateur becomes hopelessly befogged. Albéniz could have saved us a lot of trouble by writing many passages in the equivalent sharp keys. But setting this aside, the difficulties of his music all come from the nature of his thinking. His music is not self-consciously sophisticated, as that of so many of the modern Frenchmen tends to be; his mind was one of extraordinary subtlety, and his ideas so far removed from the customary ruts he had to find a correspondingly personal mode of expression. In some respects he has carried the idiom of the piano further than any other composer of his time; I do not know, for example, where else we shall find such tremendous resonance, as of organ and orchestra combined, as in the *Fête-Dieu à Seville.* His originality is invariably of the same kind; that is to say, no matter how unusual a passage

may sound at first, it is always found to talk simple sense when we have become accustomed to it. . . . Albéniz had the real logical faculty in music. He thinks continually and coherently right through his seemingly complicated harmonies, and he has a technique that enables him to say lucidly anything, however remote from the ordinary track, that he may want to say. In the *Lavapies*, for instance, he suggests to perfection the animation of the popular quarter of Madrid, with all its clashes of sound and of colour. Moussorgsky tried to do a somewhat similar thing in his picture of the Limoges market-place in his *Tableaux d'une Exposition;* but he had nothing like Albéniz's technical command. The *Lavapies* is not only good fun and good description but good music. Great as are his descriptive powers, however, he is at root an emotionalist, an eloquent evoker of moods."

After *Iberia*, although Albéniz was dying, he contrived to write two more pieces for the piano, or at least to sketch them out. These pieces, *Azulejos* and *Navarra*, he considered the finest he had written and there are those who agree with him. The first was completed by Granados and the second by Déodat de Sévérac after the composer's death.

IV

I am frequently informed that there are rules by which art can be measured, justly appraised, or pigeon-holed. I have frequently expressed doubt, publicly and privately, that this is true. I am the more inclined to doubt by the so-called serious books on the subject. That they are serious books I would not attempt to deny; whether or not they can be taken seriously is another matter. In one sense such a book as Arthur Machen's "Hieroglyphics" can be taken seriously. It makes pleasant and stimulating reading. It is written with grace. And yet the avowed purpose of the book seems to be to give the reader a formula by which he can test works of art. By the aid of this magic formula Mr. Machen blithely proceeds to prove that Jane Austen and Thackeray are not artists and that Dickens is akin to Homer. By this same formula I could prove in a couple of pages that Murillo was a greater painter than Velázquez. Mr. W. H. Hadow prefaces his valuable "Studies in Modern Music" by a critical essay in which he attempts to lay down the rules for musical criticism and to give us a formula by means of which we can judge and appraise music. By means of

this formula Mr. Hadow proves beyond any possible shadow of doubt that Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry is England's musical Messiah.[1]

With these examples before me I refrain from any attempt to make this composer fit any artistic formula. It seems to me that the "impressionistic" critic who expresses his personal preferences is much more likely to light up his subject. He is not tied down by a theory. Now subjects seldom fit theories and so it becomes the business of the formulist to make them appear to do so, as Mr. Wilson Follett does in the case of James Branch Cabell, for instance, or to deride and poke scorn at them for failing to do so. "To try and approach truth on one side after another, not to strive or cry, nor to persist in pressing forward, on any one side, with violence and self-will,— it is only thus, it seems to me, that mortals may hope to gain any vision of the mysterious Goddess, whom we shall never see except in outline, but only thus even in outline. He who will do nothing but fight impetuously towards her on his own, one, favourite, particular line, is inevitably destined to run

[1] "There has arisen among us a Composer who is capable of restoring our national Music to its true place in the art of Europe. . . . There is little presumption in the forecast when we already have such first fruits as *St. Cecilia,* and the *De Profundis,* and the *English Symphony.*"

his head into the folds of the black robe in which she is wrapped." These lines of Matthew Arnold's express my meaning exactly.

It is pleasant, therefore, to conclude this paper on a note of mere rhapsody. I have made some small attempt to give an idea of Albéniz's music, the gradual flowering of his genius. So far as I am concerned he has brilliantly fulfilled an ideal and in so doing has achieved his niche. Haruspicy is no specialty of mine, but unless I am very much mistaken he will soon outgrow the rather unimportant corner into which he has been thrust by more thriving modernists and presently be installed on a pedestal somewhere nearer the centre of our musical Pantheon. And on this pedestal we could do no better than inscribe these lines of Marliave: "*En lui, sensuelle et mélancolique, joyeuse et passionée, agreste et chevaleresque, l'âme de l'Espagne se trouve et se résume, et si l'école iberique existe aujourd'hui, consciente d'elle-même, vraiment nationale, débordante de sève jeune et vivace, c'est au délicieux génie d'Isaac Albéniz qu'elle le doit.*"

April 4, 1919.

The Holy Jumpers

" And some had visions, as they stood on chairs,
And sang of Jacob and the golden stairs,
And they all repented, a thousand strong
From their stupor and savagery and sin and wrong
And slammed with their hymn books till they shook
the room
With ' glory, glory, glory,'
And ' Boom, boom, boom.' "

Vachel Lindsay: " The Congo."

The Holy Jumpers

An improvisation on the black keys

TIME hangs heavy on an ocean voyage; thinking becomes almost a necessity. One can read, of course, the books one never gets a chance even to dip into elsewhere, "Clarissa Harlowe," or "Jean Christophe." Surely the three volume novel of the mid-Victorian period was invented with ocean travellers in mind. "Twenty pages more to make the book last from Liverpool to New York," many a novelist must have sighed. And it is pleasant to remember that some of our novelists, Theodore Dreiser and Romain Rolland, are writing books today of a suitable length for the ocean traveller. . . . But in the end reading becomes obnoxious on the sea; the unsettled monotony of the waves begs the voyager now and again to lay down his book and he begins to think. He ponders over the proverbial; he considers the obvious. No great problems are ever solved at sea; I am sure that *Tristan und Isolde* was composed on land; gunpowder and sewing machines must have been invented there. The sea is responsible for visual images of the stupidity

of the past and the futility of the future; it occurs to me that a boat trip bears a certain relation to drowning in this respect.

On my way to the Bahama Islands recently I tired in time of such literature as was available (Francis Grierson, H. G. Wells, and St. John Ervine were the authors represented) and, sitting in my deck chair alone, watching the flying fishes play, I allowed my mind to wander. There was the slightest swell but no breeze, a tropical oily ocean under me. Dante once wrote that in unpleasant moments our minds revert to happier occasions. In this excessive peace it pleased me to recall more exciting hours.

My earliest Christmas tree held its place for a second in my retina; my first pair of trousers; a succession of fires, for one of which I was responsible. On another occasion, a few months later (I must have been eleven years old), my mother awakened me in the hours close following midnight, to tell me that the stables, in close proximity to the house, were burning. A look out of the window was sufficient to arouse me. I had possessions which were dear to me, chameleons and sundry copies of works by J. T. Trowbridge and Horatio Alger, but I did not think of these. I made my escape from the house, not yet on fire, clad in my

nightrobe, and two unmated stockings of my mother's. In spite of my efforts with the garden hose, the flames, weary of the stables, consumed the house. . . . Some years later in Paris an oil stove exploded in the office adjoining mine; the walls and the ceiling were built of glass and the crackling of the panes raped the blood from my face. With precise care I grasped a pad of type-writer paper and a derby hat, belonging to a visitor, and made a very speedy exit into the street. Once I have felt the cold steel of a revolver pressed firmly against my forehead. I have capsized in a sail-boat although I am ignorant of the art of swimming. I have been run over by automobiles on two occasions. . . . But, I thought, it is perhaps from art that I have received the most memorable thrills, and not always the best art. I can never hear the *Dies Irae* in Verdi's *Requiem* without jumping and there is a phrase in César Franck's tone-poem, *Les Eolides*, a caressing sensuous phrase which I cannot even remember without shivering. The opening bars of Richard Strauss's *Don Juan* have for me the nerve-edging trick which is in the power of cocaine. I was certainly thrilled when I first heard the last measures of *Die Walküre*, music to which, considering in my deck chair, I found myself profoundly indifferent,

Wagnerdämmerung. There was a trombone player at Coney Island and there was Leo Ornstein playing his *Wild Man's Dance.*

In recollection this catalogue seemed pitiful and weak and it occurred to me that it was very fortunate that thrills can be systematized; otherwise how many men would go through life without experiencing one! Americans are easily thrilled at a base-ball game; at best they seek a prize fight. For a Spaniard nothing less than a bull-fight will do. An execution by guillotine will sometimes lift a Frenchman's pulse, but he will become much more excited over an argument in a café. Rape is popular in the south of North America and, I believe, in other localities as well. This is frequently followed by a resulting sport called lynching, and so it happens that at least one man is awarded a double thrill. Everywhere there is evidence of the search for the thrill, by the masses, by individuals: revolution, fast motoring, war, feminism, Jew baiting, Alfred Casella, aeroplaning, the Russian Ballet, are sign posts which point ways to those who lack the ingenuity to invent personal thrills or at least the capacity to enjoy them.

In the course of time, after what seemed an interminable three days, we arrived at Nassau, which

few people know is the capital of the Bahama Islands. Early one morning, as the dawn broke softly through the pink flushes of subtle cloud banks, we entered the beautiful bay. The transparent water was as prismatic as a black opal; streaks of emerald, purple, and the most vivid indigo succeeded each other. In the depths, over the clean white sand, one could see the waving sea garden and fish of splendid colours; here a sea wasp, a filmy inverted globe ready to sting the swimmer, and there the white belly of a hungry shark. The coast showed a low line of hills, on which squatted pink and yellow plaster houses with many green blinds; everywhere the waving fronds of palm trees. . . . We landed near the public park, which seemed to be crowded with Negroes, more fully clothed, was my first impression, than seemed essential or even proper in the tropics and shaded from the sun by spreading straw hats. There were few white men in the group. Now the low plaster houses shone very vivid pink, yellow, and green in the hot near sun, in a very clear atmosphere; the white shell roads sparkled like silver snakes; the black natives seemed carved from ebony.

With a delightful carelessness Providence has sprinkled New Providence — so the early settlers

called this island — with vegetation. Everywhere, in rich man's garden and by the poor Negro's hut alike the most magnificent trees flourish, growing rankly out of the thin layer of soil which clings to the coral island. Nowhere is there order; nowhere does there seem to be thought of opportunity (in fact it is well-nigh impossible to engage labour in force, so prodigal is the country, so lacking in disagreeable climatic disturbances that it is unnecessary for any one to make extra exertions), but everywhere, one next the other, one sees cocoa palms, date palms, royal palms (of which there is a stately avenue in the garden of the Hotel Colonial), palmettoes, guavas (the jelly-bearing trees), sea-grapes, cocoa-plums, bread-fruit trees (bearing great green loaves which when boiled taste like sweet potatoes and not at all like bread), silk-cotton trees (of which the roots grow from the soil five feet or more in the air, assuming curious shapes, like dragons or fantastic crocodiles, a new source of inspiration for the futurist sculptor), orange trees, grape-fruit trees, royal poncianas (with their scarlet blooms, long seed pods, and leaves of delicate fronds in many-shaded greens), alligator pears, bananas, rubber trees, sapadilloes, plantains, sugar apples, Spanish limes, almond trees, and banyan trees.

Nassau boasts few industries; the principal one seems to be sponge diving and many boats are consecrated to the divers. There are few amusements, aside from the natural ones. The bathing is magnificent. There are several good beaches on the island of New Providence. By crossing the harbour one achieves Hog Island, a narrow strip separating the harbour from the sea precisely as Venice is separated from the Adriatic by the Lido. The analogy holds doubly good for the bathing on the ocean side is nothing short of heavenly. The ocean here is no mighty monster; the transparent water is always warm and always calm, even in roughish weather, because of a bay formation; the slope of the beach into the sea is gradual. Occasionally a sea wasp stings the swimmer. In the deeper sea there is said to be danger of sharks and side-cutters, although I have never found any one in the Bahamas who has been attacked by a shark. The naturalist authorities say that the shark is usually meticulous and will not approach so large a shape as that of a man, if it is in motion. Recent acts of sharks in waters near New York, however, do not tend to support this theory. Fishing is scarcely a sport. One may catch sharks in the harbour. Tropical fish with strange names, such as Passing Jacks and

Goggle Eyes, come to the very quay edge to nibble at the hooks baited with conch that small boys dangle from short poles, and one may see them below in the water, almost as plainly in their glittering splendour as later when they lie, still moist and quivering, in baskets at the market.

Through the medium of a glass bottomed boat one may gaze at the very sea gardens of the ocean depths, planted with brain corals, sponges of sensational size, waving sea fans of amethyst and amber, chrysoprase branches of some strange sea plant, and coral caverns, in and out of which strings a solemn procession of staring, wide-eyed fish, some with speckled sides and ruby gills, others with garnet and sapphire fins, sad, thoughtful, resplendent fish, in this glittering garden, gleaming in the colours of jewels, turquoise, aquamarine, jade, chalcedony, and opal. I have seen the Gamberaia Gardens at Florence and the palace gardens at Hampton Court, the gaily formal gardens at Fontainebleau and the melancholy Luxembourg Gardens, where George Moore met Mildred, but none of these has ever appealed to my imagination as did the sea garden of the Bahamas. It might have been just here that Sadko met the Princess of the Sea and it was surely of this spot that Rimsky-Korsakoff dreamed when he wrote

the ballet of the "*petits poissons aux écailles d'or et d'argent.*"

Aside from the pleasures of the sea, the stranger will derive the greatest amount of entertainment in walking through the streets, past the sidewalk vendors of fruits, the baskets of yellow and gold and green and orange balls, the cock-sellers, lightly balancing flat baskets of fowl on their heads, past the charming houses whose owners are protected from the sun by rows of shutters, and the gardens which abound in lovely sights and smells, past the churches, of which there are many, also set deep in fragrance and shadow. Negroes everywhere, all walking with the peculiar slouch and talking with the peculiar drawl indigenous to the West Indies. There are quarters devoted to them, Grant's Town, Fox Hill, and Free Town, and there you may see street after street of picturesque huts, some of them thatched, but the Negroes live almost anywhere they please (and can afford to) in Nassau, keep shop for everybody. There are a few mulattoes, dubbed "Conchy Joes" because their colour is akin to that of the conch shell, but pure black blood predominates.

The present governor of the islands, a Scotchman, has not very long been an incumbent of the office. Each night as he dines in his palace, set in

the most perfect site on the island, on the highest hill, and very decorative in all its aspects, with a charming pink wall surrounding it, a Scotch bagpiper reminds him of home by playing Scotch airs on his instrument, as he marches round and round the porch. The first night I heard these pipes my imagination directed my thoughts towards the Orient; the hot calm night, the palm trees, the blinded palace, and the wailing instrument all suggested the Far East. If I knew the piper's name I would put it down here for the fellow was assuredly a virtuoso. He was so advanced in the technique of his art that he found pleasure in winding florid ornament around the melodies he played. He had blown the pipes, I was told, in the Great War until he was wounded: then he had been sent to New Providence on a furlough. . . . I have said that all the aspects of the palace were pleasing but I have forgotten one detail, a horrific statue of Christopher Columbus, directly in front of the main doorway, a weak attempt at the swashbuckling and the picturesque. I know of only one other statue in Nassau, that of the young Victoria, in front of the houses of parliament, as the modest assembly buildings are vaingloriously called. I have seen worse statues of the late queen

in London. I have never seen anything worse than the Columbus statue anywhere.

In the evening of the first day, beseeched by a negro to take a drive in one of the phaetons which are the conventional conveyances of the place, we passed through Grant's Town, the huts of which, set in among amazing banana and cocoanut and silk cotton trees, were dimly lighted; followed long stretches of dwarf plaster walls, like the walls in Tuscany, until at last we came to a structure built in the form of a tabernacle, the roof thatched with cocoapalm leaves and upheld by posts. The sides were open. The ground was strewn with dried palm branches. On a platform at one end of the building a preacher exhorted his brethren. Behind him sat a group of elders and deaconesses, the pillars of his church, while below extended row after row of black faces, lined under gigantic straw hats. Others stood outside. Our driver hesitated and informed us that this was a meeting of the evangelistic sect known as the Holy Jumpers. We descended from our ancient vehicle and joined the worshippers.

"Youah time hab come," the preacher was shouting. "You got to come to Jesus if you wants to come at all. He suffered for you and

you got to suffer for Him! Climb in de chariot! Hustle to de golden stairs! Kick dem debils down! Shove 'em off! Don't let none of 'em come near me! Don't you hear Him callin' you all? Oh God! Give dese people to Jesus!"

"Amen!" "Yess'r!" "Yess r!" were shrieked from various parts of the tabernacle. The preacher's effects were varied with the nicety of a Mozart overture; there were descents into adagio and pianissimo, rapid crescendos and fortissimos; slowly, slowly, slowly the assemblage was worked upon and with the progression of the exhortation the emotion increased; the preacher was frequently interrupted by shrill distorted cries.

"Is dere a sinner among you? Let him stand forth! If dere's one widout sin among you I don't know him! Come brudders, come! The time of Jesus' glory is at hand!"

"O God, take a poor sinner!" wailed a treble voice.

"Amen! Amen!"

"O Jesus, lamb!"

The preacher sat down and some one on the platform immediately started the hymn, *O, what a wonderful life!* The voices all sounded, now a contralto dominated, now a bass, but what harmony, what volume of tone, what spontaneous

attack! Suddenly another hymn followed, and in time another, with no break, and finally the tremendous and awful *Hiding in de Blood of Jesus*, a variation, perhaps, of *Washed in the Blood of the Lamb*. And now the congregation swayed to the pronounced rhythm; from side to side the lines of huge straw hats swayed. . . . Back — and forth. . . . Back — and forth. . . . "Hiding in the blood of Je — sus. . . ." Back — and forth. The rhythm dominated us all, ruled us, tyrannized over us. The very pillars of the tabernacle swayed. . . . A young negress rose and whirled up the aisle, tossing her arms in the air. "Oh God, take me!" she screamed as she fell in a heap at the foot of the platform. There she lay, shrieking, her face hideous, her body contorted and writhing in convulsive shudders. . . . Hats here and there jerked quickly out of rhythm. Moans and hoarse cries. . . . The terrible inexorable singing went on, on, on. . . . The heads swayed. . . . Back — and forth. . . . "Hiding in de blood of Je — sus. . . ." A girl fell flat on her back in the centre aisle. A circle of foam formed on her lips. Her teeth were clenched, her fists set tight; her arms and legs jerked convulsively. . . . Another woman, a deaconess from the platform, bent over her. . . . "De Lord am

comin!" she shouted. "Take Him. . . . Heah me, take Him! Take Him! Get rid youah debils! Shake 'em out! Open youah mouff and receive de Lord!" . . . The initiate shrieked and struggled. Horrible, inarticulate, meaningless sounds issued from between her clenched teeth. Foam again formed on her lips. The nerves in her ankles seemed to be raw. . . . The congregation swayed. . . . "Hiding in de blood of Je — sus!" . . . Back — and forth. . . . Back — and forth. . . . "You got to come. . . . You won't be a wicked sinner no longer. . . . Come! Come! Come! Come! Come! Come to de Lord!" . . . The deaconess grew confidential . . . almost in a whisper: "Open youah mouff, an' take Him in!" "Ai! Ai!" shrieked the poor sinner. . . . "Hiding in de blood of Je — sus!" . . . Back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. . . . "Here He is! He's comin'! He's comin'!" The stooping woman herself became hysterical and semi-epileptic; her eyes rolled with excitement; supreme pleasure was in her voice. The crisis approached. It seemed as if the girl lying prone was in a frenzy of delight. Every muscle twitched; her nerves were exposed; her fists clenched and unclenched. Uncontrollable and strange cries, unformed words struggled from her

lips . . . and then at last a dull moaning, and she lay still.

The swaying continued; others jumped to the Lord; others exhorted; there were more convulsions, more frenzies; the scene became indescribably wild, like a monstrous witches' sabbath; how closely the ecstasy of a Negro's sanctity approaches sorcery! Would Huysmans have altered his famous description of the Black Mass if he had seen the Holy Jumpers? According to Remy de Gourmant the Frenchman would have welcomed such first hand experience. "*Le messe noire est purement imaginaire,*" writes the French critic in the third series of "Promenades Littéraires." "*C'est moi qui cherchai les détails sur cette cérémonie fantastique. Je n'en trouvai pas, car il n'y en a pas. Finalement, Huysmans arrangea en messe noire la célèbre scène de conjuration contre La Vallière pour laquelle Montespan avait prêté son corps aux obscènes simagrées d'un sorcier infame.*"

Next day at breakfast black Priscilla at the hotel gave her view.

"I'se a Baptist," she said. "I don't hold no stock in dem jumpers. De females jump an' de males jump after 'em."

September 23, 1915.

On the Relative Difficulties of Depicting Heaven and Hell in Music

"While angels syncopate with brusque disdain
Their hemidemisemipsalmody
Four demons paint a fugal hurricane
Against a dusty fresco calidly."

Donald Evans: "Ricanio in Cairo."

On the Relative Difficulties of Depicting Heaven and Hell in Music

BEGINNING with the eighteenth century and extending down through our own time heaven and hell have exerted a powerful sway over the imagination of the musician. It would seem, indeed, that the most abstract of the arts could express to us more satisfactorily than poetry, painting, or sculpture the symbolism inherent in the names of these post-death kingdoms. Heaven suggests goodness, nobility, sublimity, glory, simple faith, aspiration, charity, brotherly love, and, in the minds of composers, perhaps because of the mistranslation of the names of obscure Hebrew instruments of which we have no pictorial conception, these qualities are best expressed concretely by means of harps and trumpets. Hell, on the other hand, which suggests vice, ugliness, deceit, and defeat, is generally associated with snarling bassoons and rattling drums. Curiously enough, although there can be nothing inherently wicked about music, it is often with hell rather than heaven that composers have achieved their

best effects; and the noblest music is not specifically concerned with paradise. The symphony in C minor, of which it is unnecessary to name the composer, Schubert's symphony in C major, which has only been associated with heaven through Schumann's adjectival comment, *Or sai chi l'onore*, and the final scene of *Die Walküre* were all no doubt inspired by God in the truest religious sense, but the composers were making no attempt to picture to us the streets of pearl, the mighty chryselephantine throne, or the winged supernaturals who are said to play harps in the air. A real heaven in opera or tone-poem is quite likely to remind a musician of the key of C major, the tonic and the dominant, and the diatonic scale, whereas hell and the devil seem to insist on five or six sharps or flats, esoteric scales, and a daedal disregard for exoteric rhythms. The conclusion of the second act of *Hänsel und Gretel* furnishes us with an excellent typical example of what usually happens in music when a real heaven is turned on. Humperdinck here is satisfied, with the aid of transparencies, coloured lights, and stately-tripping angels [1]

[1] Mr. Pepys's experience with angel music in the theatre is unique and should be recorded: "Went to see the *Virgin and Martyr*, it is mighty pleasant; not that the play

bearing gilded palm leaves, to transfigure and glorify a tune which suggests a Protestant Sunday School and which dramatically is probably quite in keeping with the Protestant Sunday School ideas of the two babes in the forest. However, it may be said, with its unimaginative succession of tonic and dominant chords and plentiful arpeggios, to represent one of the weakest moments in the score. Arpeggios, by the way, are seemingly an essential accompaniment to anything heavenly. It is not alone Little Eva who expires to them; even Richard Strauss reverted to them for his balefully banal heaven music in his tone-poem, *Death and Transfiguration*, an episode which sends some of us away from the concert-hall fully determined never to do good in this world for fear we may be consigned to listen to such vapid music all our immortal lives. Heaven indeed must be a very dull place to inspire such saccharine chords from the composer of the acescent and biting *Elektra*. Again in *The Legend of Joseph* an angel steps

is worth much, but it is finely acted by Beck Marshall. But that which did please me beyond anything in the whole world, was the wind musique where the angel comes down; which is so sweet that it ravished me; and, indeed, in a word did wrap up my soul, so that it made me really sick, just as I have formerly been when in love with my wife, that I could think of nothing else."

our way to a tune which suggests that Strauss is not at his best when thinking of heaven. Nor is Mascagni, who, in *Iris*, introduces us to a Japanese paradise, via a lotus-flower route, much more successful. For the naïve simplicities of *The Creation* [1] and for the thundering God-fearing music of *The Messiah* I have more sympathy and of all heavenly music I do not think better exists than the *Dance of the Angels* in Wolf-Ferrari's *Vita Nuova*. There is a test for great art, and you may apply this test equally to Paul Verlaine or Shakespeare, in that it treats of the sublime with simplicity and the simple with sublimity. This minuet, scored for harps, piano, and kettledrums, bringing up to mind a divine fresco of pre-Raphaelite angels, of bedaisy sprinkled green fields, of deep blue skies, of lakes of still deeper blue, circled by ilexes and cypresses, is indeed celestial in its simplicity, as poignant a simplicity as that of one of the poems of "Sagesse." It reflects the simple faith of its composer and it begets faith in its listeners. There is gnosis in this music. Gluck, too, knew the secret; Gluck,

[1] Haydn told Griesinger, his biographer, that in one of the oldest of his symphonies the ruling idea was how God spoke with a hardened sinner, and begged him to mend his ways, but without making any impression!

above all others, knew the secret, but Gluck was inspired by the pagan heaven of the Greeks, a more beautiful ideal than the heaven of the Christians. In all opera I cannot recall a more simple, a more touchingly serene page than the music of the scene of the Elysian Fields in *Orfeo*. The first and unbelievably lovely dance of the happy spirits in F major, " which," Vernon Lee assures us in " Orpheus in Rome," one of the most mood-compelling of her essays, " seems, in its even flow, to carry the soul, upon some reedy, willowy stream, into the heart of the land of the happy dead," is immediately followed by an exquisite flute melody, to which, if we are not disturbed by the action on the stage (and it is often well to cover one's eyes) we may imagine the filmiest of sylphs floating lazily through the ether. The song of the Happy Shade enhances the mood and even the entrance of Orpheus does not break the spell which continues to hold us in its power until the descending curtain shuts from our ears the divine chorus which ends the scene. The singing of no Christian angels can ever compensate for this lovely pagan choir. The scene of the furies exhibits Gluck's talent in demoniacism. How persistently they scamper and riot! How tremendous is their marmorean and terrible No! This

naïve but substantial canvas suggests Orcagna's fresco, *The Triumph of Death*, in the Campo Santo at Pisa much more definitely than Liszt's *Todtentanz*, which is intended as a musical transmutation of the picture.

In the music of Gluck we are assuredly near the heart of true beauty, which, after all, may be the real God, the real heavenly kingdom. Ideas differ, however. In 1665 Fr. Arnoulx, canon of the cathedral of Riez in Provence, published at Rouen a book, now very rare, entitled, "Du paradis et de ses merveilles, où est amplement traicté de la félicité eternelle et de ses joyes." After describing what can be seen in heaven he turns to the pleasures of the ear: "If the glory of the picture is all that one can desire, also the ear is charmed by melodious music, pleasant harmony, gentle murmurings, soft and beautiful voices. There is a director; there are singers and musicians in abundance; there are thousands of millions of beautiful voices which sing in harmony, observing very perfectly all the rules of music. The director is Jesus Christ; the singers are the angels, the blessed happy angels. There are three bands of angels and each of them is divided into three choirs: the Cherubim, the Seraphim, and the Thrones sing soprano; the Dominations and the

Principalities sing alto; the Powers and the Virtues sing tenor; the archangels and the angels in the lowest choirs sing bass; even the saints come to sing with these. Jesus Christ gives the key to all and intones the motet, which is new. With this celestial music and so many melodious voices of different kinds there is yet, for the entire perfection of the scale, the sound of the harp, of the flute, of viols, of the spinet, of the lute, and all other kinds of instruments which marvellously tickle the delicacy of our ears."

Music of hell is usually associated with his kaisership the devil. Once even, it is related, on the authority of a composer, the devil himself wrote a tune; this is Tartini's *Devil's Trill Sonata* which violinists often play to this day. M. Lalande, in his "Voyage d'un François en Italie" tells the story, which he says he had directly from Tartini, and Dr. Burney repeats it. Michael Kelly informs us, in memoirs which are not entirely to be relied on in other respects, that Nardini, a pupil of Tartini, assured him that the tale was correct in every detail. One night in the year 1713, it seems, Tartini dreamed that he had made a contract with the devil who promised to be at his service on all occasions; indeed, in the dream the musician's new servant anticipated

all his wishes and fully satisfied his desires. Ultimately the two became so familiar that Tartini presented the fiend with his violin in order to ascertain what kind of musician he was; when, to Tartini's astonishment, he heard him play an air, so beautiful in itself and performed with such taste and skill that it surpassed all the music he had ever heard in his life. Tartini awoke in a state of feverish excitement and delight, and seized his fiddle in the hope of repeating the music he had just heard, but the arch enemy had gone and his music with him! Nevertheless Tartini took pen and music-paper and immediately composed the sonata which bears the devil's name. It is the best of Tartini's works but so far inferior has its composer declared it to be to the music which he heard in his dream that he said he would have smashed his instrument and abandoned music for the rest of his life could he have subsisted by any other means.

It was thoughtful of the devil to write this sonata in the style of the eighteenth century. What if it had occurred to him to dash off Leo Ornstein's sonata, opus 31? Could Tartini have remembered the notes and put them down? I doubt it. As it is we have Tartini's word for the fact that the music as performed was infinitely

more extraordinary than his transcription of it. Memory is treacherous at best and to remember a whole sonata, taking in at the same time the virtuosity of the devil and the glamour of his presence which must have shared interest with his playing, must be adjudged a remarkable feat. Broad, sweeping, sensuous melodies and rapid, dashing cascades of notes, to be played with devilish abandon, alternate in this music. If Tolstoy had been more familiar with musical literature he would have found this composition more to his purpose than the harmless *Kreutzer Sonata.* In one section the leading notes are trilled; hence probably the title. Also the violinist is given an opportunity in the cadenza to trill to his bow's content. The work is difficult and we are forced to the conclusion that the devil must have been an exceptionally fine fiddler.

In 1858–9 Liszt composed two orchestral paraphrases of episodes from the " Faust " of Nicolaus Lenau and in the second of these, *The Dance in the Village Tavern,* more commonly known as the *Mephisto Waltz,* the devil plays the violin, while Faust, in sensuous excitement, waltzes away with a black-eyed peasant girl. John Sullivan Dwight, once a prominent Boston critic, held that this music was " positively devilish, simply diabolical

. . . it shuts out every ray of light and heaven, from whence music sprang." Perhaps the spirit of ataraxy is in the air; at any rate today we can listen to this piece without trembling. When the devil played the fiddle, Philip Hale assures us, his bowing was so vigorous that the dancers kept on dancing until they died. Miss Jeannette d'Abadie saw Mrs. Martibalsarena dance with four frogs at the same time at a Sabbat personally conducted by Satan, who played in an extraordinarily wild fashion. His favourite instrument was the fiddle but he occasionally performed on the bagpipe. The good monk Abraham à Sancta-Clara, according to Mr. Hale, once meditated on the devil's taste in musical instruments: "Does he prefer the harp? Surely not, for it was by the harp that he was driven from the body of Saul. A trumpet? No, for the brilliant tones of the trumpet have many times dispersed the enemies of the Lord. A tambourine? Ah, no, for Miriam, the sister of Aaron, after Pharaoh and his host were drowned in the Red Sea, took a tambourine in her hand and with all the women about her praised and thanked God. A fiddle? No, indeed, for with a fiddle an angel rejoiced the heart of St. Francis. I do not wish to abuse the patience of the reader, and so I say that nothing is more

agreeable to Satan for accompaniment to the dance than the ancient pagan lyre."

Rubinstein's orchestral poem *Faust* seems to lack any reference to the devil, but in his opera, *The Demon,* which until recently, at least, has remained popular in Russia, he drew a full length portrait of the tempter.[1] There are minor glimpses of hell in *Der Freischütz* and *Robert le Diable;* Massenet in *Grisélidis* turned his attention to a bourgeois, boisterous, gothic, gargoyle kind of devil, a devil with a wife, which he limned with

[1] Satan is also a character in Rubinstein's *Paradise Lost,* in which the fiend and a chorus of rebel angels are frequently heard to shriek and howl. The orchestral introduction to part III paints the "temptation and the fall." In Sir Arthur Sullivan's *The Golden Legend* Prince Henry of Hoheneck, lying sick in body and mind in his castle of Vautsberg on the Rhine, has consulted the physicians of Salerno and learned that he can only be cured by the blood of a maiden who shall, of her own free will, consent to die for his sake. Regarding the remedy as impossible the Prince prepares to die when he is visited by Lucifer disguised as a physician. The demon tempts the Prince with alcohol, to which he yields in such measure that ultimately he is deprived of place and power and driven forth as an outcast. Then, of course, a maiden offers herself to save him and he is cured. This happy ending is foreshadowed in the prologue in which Lucifer makes an unsuccessful attempt to wreck the Cathedral of Strassbourg. The second act of C. Villiers Stanford's dramatic oratorio, *Eden,* is laid in hell, and Satan naturally plays a prominent rôle in the ensuing scene which is devoted to the fall of man.

no little humour. The most important air of this amusing apparition is called *Loin de sa femme!* Charles Martin Loeffler, the Alsatian composer who resides in Boston or thereabouts, has written *The Devil's Villanelle*, a tone poem after Maurice Rollinat's "Villanelle du Diable." The music follows the verse line by line, word by word. The two refrains, "Hell's a burning, burning, burning," and "The Devil, prowling, runs about," both have their themes. The word "*crapule*" suggests Aristide Bruant's celebrated song, *A la Villette* (often sung inimitably by Yvette Guilbert), to Mr. Loeffler and he quotes the ditty. To decorate the word "*magister*" he involves the *Ça Ira* and *La Carmagnole* in a contrapuntal fracas. Death plays the fiddle in Saint-Saëns's tone-poem, *Danse Macabre*, while skeletons click bones and dance. There is surely some devilry in this business. At least one American composer, Henry Hadley, has done his bit for the devil. His work is a tone-poem, *Lucifer*, after Vondel's five act tragedy. The music describes the war between the powers of darkness and the powers of light, until the defeated Lucifer is cast down into chaos. The Lucifer theme is described as "sinister, foreboding." The work has been performed in New York and Boston but I have not heard it. It is

principally, however, with the Faust legend, which has intrigued composers for considerably over a century, that musicians have gone to hell. Many of these operas, symphonies, and overtures have disappeared and only musical dictionaries and white-haired gatherers of statistics remind us that they once existed. Even much of the incidental music composed to be performed with Goethe's tragedy has fallen into oblivion. The very names of Radziwill, Lindpaintner, Béaucourt, de Peelaert, Porphire-Désiré Hennebert, F. de Roda, Rietz, Henry Rowley Bishop, Louise Angélique Bertin, Heinrich Zoellner, Lickl, Karl Eberwein, Louis Schloesser, Eduard Lassen, and L. Gordigiani have faded away. We do remember Schumann but who knows his *Faust* music maugre Mr. Newman's earnest praise? Spohr's *Faust*, too, is forgotten, Spohr of whom W. H. Hadow has said, "His whole conception of the art is soft and voluptuous, his Heaven is a Garden of Atlantis, and even his Judgement-day is iridescent." Weber might have written a *Faust*. When he was engaged to write an opera for London he was given a choice of this subject or *Oberon*. He chose the latter. Wagner's *Eine Faust Overture* is not played as frequently as the prelude to *Die Meistersinger* but there are probably few concert-

goers who have not heard it. Felix Weingartner's incidental music for Goethe's play was performed at Weimar in 1908. More recently a young Frenchwoman, Lili Boulanger, who died before she achieved a style, set a scene from the second part of Goethe's *Faust* to music and called the result a cantata, but her devil is bedecked with Wagnerian harmonies and melodies. . . . Liszt's *Faust Symphony* is certainly with us both in spirit and flesh. The third movement is devoted to Mephistopheles. Ernest Newman says that this "section is particularly ingenious. It consists, for the most part, of a kind of burlesque upon the subjects of the *Faust*, which are here passed, as it were, through a continuous fire of irony and ridicule. This is a far more effective way of depicting 'the spirit of denial' than making him mouth a farrago of pantomime bombast, in the manner of Boito. The being who exists, for the purposes of drama, only in antagonism to Faust, whose main activity consists only in endeavouring to frustrate every good impulse of Faust's soul, is really best dealt with, in music, not as a positive individuality, but as the embodiment of negation — a malicious, saturnine parody of all the good that has gone to the making of Faust. The *Mephistopheles* is not only a piece of diabolically

clever music, but the best picture we have of a character that in the hands of the average musician becomes either stupid, or vulgar, or both. As we listen to Liszt's music, we feel that we really have the Mephistopheles of Goethe's drama." Mr. Apthorp says, "One may suspect the composer of taking Mephisto's '*Ich bin der Geist der stehts verneint*' for the motto of this movement" and James Huneker tells us that "in the Mephistopheles Liszt appears in his most characteristic pose — Abbé's robe tucked up, Pan's hoofs showing, and the air charged with cynical mockeries and travesties of sacred love and ideals (themes are topsy-turvied à la Berlioz)" . . .

At the present day we occasionally hear three *Faust* operas and often two. Boito, after his prologue in which Mefistofele challenges the heavenly hosts, ventures no nearer heaven than the classical Sabbath scene in which Faust meets Helena in a sort of Italianate duet. To me this is the unbearable episode of this lyric drama. The scene in which Mefistofele twirls the globe in his palm while his brazen and craven cohorts circle and chortle around him is very effective but when Chaliapine appears as the spirit which denies it is a matter for doubt whether it is the Russian bass or Boito who makes the effect. And certainly Marghe-

rita's death in prison remains the best scene in the opera. Berlioz in his " dramatic legend " is nearest hell in the *Song of the Flea*, an excellent piece of sardonic ribaldry, although the ride, with its ghastly accentuated horse-hoofs beating up from the orchestra, is very wonderful. But Ernest Newman thinks that Berlioz's devil is the only operatic Mephistopheles that carries conviction. " He never, even for a moment, suggests the inanely grotesque figure of the pantomime. Of malicious, saturnine devilry there is plenty in him; no one, except Liszt, could compete with Berlioz on this ground. But there is more than this in the character. In such scenes as that on the banks of the Elbe, where he lulls Faust to sleep, there is a real suggestion of power, of dominion over ordinary things, that takes Mephistopheles out of the category of the merely theatrical and puts him in that of the philosophical." Marguerite's glorification is a forgettable passage just as Gounod's attempt at the translation of Marguerite is the weakest point in his score, but as no one nowadays ever ventures to sit an opera through it was perhaps clever of Gounod to put his heaven scene last so that only the ushers and stage-hands might hear it before they extinguish the lights in the theatre. Nevertheless you will probably remem-

ber the episode with its white-winged supernumeraries rising above the housetops to arpeggio chords and a silly chant, not even the perfumed sanctity we have the right to expect of a modern French composer.

Faust, it seems to me, of all conceivable operatic subjects, cries out for collaborators. It is unfortunate that César Franck is dead because I think that the Belgian composer and Igor Stravinsky together might have evolved something extraordinary. For César Franck came nearer to expressing aspiration and vague longing in his mystic music than perhaps any other composer. It is not alone the *Rédemption* and the *Béatitudes* that shine in blessed light. The D minor symphony is to me the finest expression of simple sublimity to be found in all music. This haunting reticulation of tones aspires and even reaches beyond aspiration. The terrible first movement warns us of the Judgment Day and then in melting human tones forgives us our sins. The allegretto is like a graceful dance of angels, the angels of Benozzo Gozzoli, clad in robes of mulberry and lilac, sewn with threads of gold and silver, their halos glistening in a blue light, itself impregnated with golden dust, while the hautboys and harps ravish our ears and the soaring violins give ample promise of the

glory of the heavenly choirs. Santa Teresa would have loved this music, music mystic and beneficent at the same time, not the mysticism tinged with chypre and verveine and essence of bergamot which makes Debussy's music a powerful stimulant to jaded nerves. César Franck could have realized the simple purity of Marguerite and he would have carried her triumphantly, gloriously, magnificently through vague Gothic arches of tone which would have burst the boundaries of any singing theatre and transported us perforce to Amiens or Chartres.

But Papa Franck could never have managed the hell scenes of *Faust*. He would have made of Abaddon a truly epicene kingdom, frequented by bardashes and catamites. No, for hell we should turn to Stravinsky and what a dashing, erratic, spontaneous discordant devil we might expect from him! A devil in quintuple and sextuple rhythms, a devil cap-a-pie with triplets in sixteenths, and figurations after the worst manner of sheol, a delightful, insinuating, firefly, nervous, marvellous fellow of a fiend with piccolos, flutes, clarinets, hautboys, bassoons, French horns, and celestas at his beck and call, a Zamiel with nerve-racking glissandos on the violins and deep, passionate, long-bowed, mocking viola notes at his com-

mand, Beelzebub with a shower of shuddering octaves and a flood of discordant tenths, an Apollyon who could sing bass and tenor and a little falsetto, in fact a regular bing-bang-boom hell of a devil in the best Russian Ballet manner!

Now a Stravinsky devil played against a César Franck heaven would make a *Faust* that would keep the oldest subscriber to the Opera awake, and would effectually destroy all hope for the future of Hun music even in Germany. Even old Nietzsche, could he hear it, would be delighted with this nexus of mysticism and nervous energy, this combat of the life-force with the spirit of God!

November 18, 1918.

Sir Arthur Sullivan

"The end of art is unquestionably pleasure, but pleasure is a term that rouses the suspicions of the British matron. Even at the present day when the derision of the world has driven her to acknowledge 'art' as one of the necessities of civilized life, she instinctively seeks those forms of it that convey something else as well as pleasure. She prefers an oratorio to an opera, an archaic or highly mannerized picture which gives her an opportunity for study to one of direct sensuous appeal."

Emily James Putnam: "The Lady."

Sir Arthur Sullivan

IN her preface to the new edition of "Eighteenth Century Studies," by far the most remarkable of her books, Vernon Lee pauses to point out the fact that comparatively little "available immortality" (thrice wondrous phrase!) is reserved for the musician. Museums preserve and cherish the work of painter and sculptor; libraries house poet and prose artist, not alone the work of the masters but also that of inferior men, their forerunners, imitators, and rivals, as well. The case of the musician, whose work remains incomplete until it is interpreted, is exceptional. Space may be crowded but room can always be found for more objects but time is inexorable and music occupies time instead of space. So in our concert halls the great names gradually crowd out the feebler ones. Moments can no longer be spared for Piccinni, Sacchini, and Hasse. Of the glories of eighteenth century music Bach, Gluck, Handel, Haydn, and Mozart alone have survived. In the mid-nineteenth century Bellini, Donizetti, Rossini, and Meyerbeer held nine-tenths of the stage at the old Academy of Music. In the twentieth century

three men, Wagner, Verdi, and Puccini, had almost acquired a monopoly of the singing theatres until the war drove Wagner out and the names of his heroes became the names of German railroads and trenches in France. Much that is lovely in music must thus inevitably disappear from the ken of man unless the revival of such a work as Monteverde's *Orfeo* or Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona* may serve to teach a careless public that carved chalices of pure gold lie buried in seventeenth and eighteenth century treasure houses.

An extremely meagre portion of this available immortality has been allotted to English composers. Even in England the Italian or German has always held the centre of the stage or the concert platform. Handel lived in London for many years, and Beethoven, Haydn, Weber, and Mendelssohn all wrote works for the English public. The greater genius of foreign musicians has thus driven British music off the boards. Even the great Purcell only exists in the musical histories or in the minds of antiquarian enthusiasts, while Balfe and Wallace, once the prides of the London theatres, have been sent on tour in the provinces, entrusted to the mercies of amateurs, church choirs, and incompetent travelling companies. As for the moderns, Delius, Holbrooke, Bantock,

Scott, Wallace, and Ireland have found the competition of Richard Strauss, Igor Stravinsky, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Puccini, and Debussy too strong to combat effectively. Even Elgar, who seemed for a time to be conquering new worlds of the symphony and oratorio, is gradually falling into deserved disrepute. Probably not one of these men will be able to command more than a sporadic particle of time in the concert halls ten years from now. But England boasts one composer who, I think, will still be heard when all of us, young and old alike, are dead. That composer is Sir Arthur Sullivan.

No adequate life of this musical genius has yet appeared. There have been many biographers but not one of them discusses his music with any discernment or authority, not one of them writes with a trace of literary charm. The longest and the most recent, "Gilbert, Sullivan, and D'Oyly Carte," by François Cellier and Cunningham Bridgeman (Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons; London, 1914) scarcely refers to the music at all. Cellier died while the work was in progress and Bridgeman frankly admits that he knows nothing whatever about the tonal art. It is also obvious that he knows nothing about the art of writing. Of the others B. W. Findon's "Sir Arthur Sullivan and

His Operas" (Sisley's Ltd.; London, 1908) is the best, but it is very slight. C. Willeby's book in the Masters of English Music Series (London, 1893) is practically worthless, and the same may be said for H. Saxe Wyndham's "Arthur Sullivan" (George Newnes; London, 1901). Arthur Lawrence's "Sir Arthur Sullivan" (Bowdon; London; 1899) is padded to a decent length, but the book does not contain two illuminating or suggestive phrases. The bibliography in this work is useful, however. H. Augustine Simcoe's "Sullivan versus Critic" (Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent and Co., Ltd.; London, 1906) is a compilation of adverse and favourable criticisms of the man's work, but as the emphasis is put upon *Ivanhoe* and *The Light of the World* the book falls under the classification of literary curiosities. Louis Engel's paper in "From Handel to Hallé" is, of course, entirely negligible and the article in Grove's Dictionary, written by Sir George Grove himself, while sufficiently appreciative, is little more than a catalogue.

By far the most interesting work touching the subject is "The Savoy Opera" by Percy Fitzgerald (Chatto and Windus; 1894). Unfortunately Mr. Fitzgerald was not a musician and the emphasis in the book is laid on Gilbert's contribu-

tion. However he gives us a better account of the method of collaboration than is to be found elsewhere and his infrequent musical judgments are very acute. He is not taken in, for instance, by Sullivan's oratorios. "Unfortunately for the development of his talent," writes Mr. Fitzgerald, "he was attracted by the forms of oratorio, usually written for some great festival, whose rather stilted academical style often checks all airiness and spontaneousness." And of *The Martyr of Antioch*, *Ivanhoe*, and *The Golden Legend* he writes with rare perspicacity, "These are excellent, scholarly works, but they seem to lack inspiration, and are academical in style and treatment. It may be laid down that every trained musician can write his cantata or oratorio, just as every *littérateur* can write his novel or biography. . . . Without inspiration these things are mere exercises. *Ivanhoe* was certainly a ponderous work, more like a vast symphony protracted through several acts than an opera."

There is to be observed a tendency on the part of most of the other biographers to emphasize and exaggerate the importance of the minor work of Sullivan. It would be perhaps too much to say that the composer of *Onward, Christian Soldiers* would be forgotten if that were his only contri-

bution to the tone art, but to say, as some have said, that the Sullivan of the hymns, the Sullivan of the string quartet, the Sullivan of *The Golden Legend* and *The Light of the World*, the Sullivan of the *In Memoriam* overture, the Sullivan of the music for *The Tempest*, the Sullivan of the *Irish Symphony*, the Sullivan of the ballet, *The Enchanted Isle*, the Sullivan of the concerto for 'cello, the Sullivan of the *Te Deum*, or the Sullivan of *Ivanhoe* is a greater Sullivan than the Sullivan of the Savoy operas is equivalent to saying that the Wagner of the C major symphony is a greater Wagner than the Wagner of *Tristan und Isolde*. Some of this music is good, some of it is even delightful, but none of it is important enough to carry its composer over the treacherous sandbars of a decade in the memory of man. A good deal of it is simply well-made academic music in the standard forms.

The great Sir Arthur Sullivan then, the lasting composer, was the writer of the Savoy operas, more particularly still the collaborator of Gilbert. For, curiously enough, Sullivan failed, comparatively speaking (sometimes outright) even here in his true vein of light opera when some one other than Gilbert furnished him the book on which to work. *Box and Cox*, *The Beauty Stone*,

The Chieftain, *The Emerald Isle*, and *Haddon Hall* are all but forgotten. They will soon pass into the limbo of things, become outcasts in the universe of art. No available immortality is reserved for them. It is but just to remark that W. S. Gilbert was quite as much lost without his friend. The plays which he wrote alone, the books which he offered to other composers, are no longer the source of much more than a little innocent merriment. To say truth Gilbert's satire, his sense of parody, burlesque, and caricature, palls unless diluted, stimulated, pointed, and made delicate by the melody of Sullivan. Nowhere else, unless we except the Brothers de Goncourt, can we find an example of artists so well fitted to work together. So it follows that it is on the series commonly called the Savoy Operas, although several of them were not in the first instance produced at the Savoy,[1] that Sullivan's chief claim to serious consideration as an important composer rests. *Trial by Jury*, *Pinafore*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Patience*, *Iolanthe*, *The Mikado*, *The*

1 *The Pirates of Penzance*, for instance, was produced at the Fifth Avenue Theatre in New York, December 31, 1879. A single performance for purposes of copyright was given at Paignton, England, on the previous afternoon, and the London production was made at the Opera Comique, April 3, 1880. At Paignton Richard Mansfield was the Major General.

Yeomen of the Guard, and *The Gondoliers*, and probably even *The Sorcerer*, *The Princess Ida*, and *Ruddigore*,[1] operas with which this generation is strangely unfamiliar, will brave the fury of time as steadfastly as any of their French or Italian contemporaries. Indeed, aside from *The Barber of Seville* and *Die Meistersinger*, can any one point to other comic operas as good as these composed during the nineteenth century?

Sullivan has been called the English Auber and again, the English Offenbach. Neither epithet is just, neither is apposite. Auber wrote light music and insofar as that matters in a question of comparison Sullivan may be called Auberian; Offenbach wrote burlesques and insofar as that matters in a question of comparison Sullivan may be called Offenbachian. Sullivan once said to Findon: "This epithet, 'the English Offenbach,' was first given me in a burst of ill-natured spleen by G. A. Macfarren, and he used it in his article on Music in the Encyclopedia Britannica. It was never

[1] *Ruddigore* is the only one of the series never revived at the Savoy. It has commonly been called a failure. But the work was given 288 times during the original run. It contains some of Sullivan's most charming music, but the enormous cost of mounting and dressing this opera is out of ratio to the drawing power in a small theatre. Originally, £6,000 was spent on the dresses and properties, £2,000 on the scenery.

used as a compliment." Dr. Hanslick must have heard it somewhere for he refers to the matter in his review of *The Mikado:* "Sullivan has been reproached with imitating Offenbach. It shows at any rate more sense to learn from Offenbach than to abuse him. Offenbach's exuberant richness of melody and sparkling wit certainly cannot be acquired; but what might and should be learned from him are the terse forms, the well-chosen rhythms, the adaptability to the voice, the judiciously arranged orchestra. In all these things Sullivan has taken the composer of *Fortunio* as his pattern, without giving up his own independence. That the Englishman has not attained the sparkling liveliness and piquant charm of the Frenchman (*sic*) is easily to be understood; but on the other hand Sullivan shows himself in concerted numbers to be the more thoroughly cultivated musician." It seems fairly obvious now that Sullivan never attains the champagne-like sparkle, the flash of the boulevards, *du chic* of *Orphée aux Enfers;* nor is there to be found in his music any parallel to the poignant and touching emotion of the last act of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann.* On the other hand Sullivan is seldom, if ever, banal, never vulgar, while page after page of Offenbach is sheer shoddy. The composer of *Patience* writes with a grace, a

refinement of style, a musicianship which, except occasionally, are never to be met with in the music of the composer of *La Grande Duchesse.* Sullivan's musical style, indeed, may be regarded as classic rather than romantic. And it may be observed that the musical idioms of the two are almost as distinct as those of Wagner and Verdi. Offenbach, albeit a German Jew, gave a new impetus to the lighter style of French music; while Sullivan's muse breathed as truly insular an air as that of William Shakespeare. One thing is certain, that Sullivan's operas are much more alive today than those of Auber and Offenbach.

But in comparing Sullivan with his Viennese contemporaries Hanslick is on surer ground and he makes an excellent point: "Sir Arthur Sullivan's music . . . adapts itself to the words in an unconstrained and natural manner; it is always melodious, lively, and uniform in style, and upon this point we lay great stress. From year to year we have occasion to lament over the false exaggeration and deterioration of operetta which, mistaking its very being and limits, makes a show of tragic pathos, with instrumentation *à la* Wagner, and with grand tenor and prima donna parts. . . . Any one who can call to mind the Vienna operettas of the last ten or fifteen years will confess that

their charming details are almost always spoiled by a complete absence of style. Ballads with the popular harp accompaniment take turns with grandiose noisy finales; love duets between Hans and Grethe end in loud unison *à la* Verdi on the high B flat or C; merry scenes at a fair rival the conspiracy in the *Huguenots*. Most of the composers who write for our smaller theatres appear to wish above anything to show that they know how to write grand opera, while in reality they only show that they do not know how to write operetta. Alluding to a remark of Berlioz, I may compare them to troubadours, who wander through the land with trombones on their backs instead of guitars.[1] . . . The songs in *The Mikado* are so intelligible, and kept within such modest limits, that powerful lungs and technical perfection are almost as little needed for them as

[1] This is as true today as it was in the time of Dr. Hanslick. The orchestration and the demands made on the singers in Dr. Leo Fall's *Die Geschiedene Frau,* produced in English as *The Girl in the Train,* the plot of which is as boisterous and gay as any book Offenbach set, are frequently as heavy as those of a Wagnerian music drama. Lehár, perhaps misled by semi-serious subjects, made the same mistake in *Ziguenerliebe* and *Eva.* Even Oskar Straus fell in *Ein Walzertraum.* It is perfectly clear to all of us today (as it was to Dr. Hanslick at the time the work was first produced) that the music of *Die Fledermaus* goes beyond all the reasonable bounds of operetta.

for the music of Adam, Hiller, Monsigny, and Grétry. The orchestra is subservient to the singing, without failing to lend a brighter colouring or sharper characteristics in the right place."

It may safely be said that the ballad is the form most natural to the English composer. Without going into a discussion of the work of such men as Molloy and Marzials it is sufficient to recall that *The Beggar's Opera* (which is a *pastiche*) and the works of Balfe and Wallace, whose operas pleased poet and peasant in the mid-nineteenth century, are based on the ballad. And the ballad is an outstanding feature in Sullivan's operettas. Such numbers as *The Nightingale's Song* and *A Maiden Fair to See* in *Pinafore*, or Frederic's air, *Oh, is there not one maiden breast*, in *The Pirates* are capital examples. Sometimes Sullivan transcends the form as in Jack Point's *I have a song to sing, O!* in *The Yeomen of the Guard*, Sullivan's favourite among his own works. Here an exceedingly ingenious metrical scheme of Gilbert's is handled with extraordinary effect and the tragic return of this ballad in the last finale of the opera, in which the mood is varied by a change in the situation, is as fine an example of a device of this kind as is to be found anywhere in lyric drama. Yet it must be admitted that the song is

purely English in style. Recall *Take a pair of sparkling eyes* in *The Gondoliers*. This air, redolent of lanes and lassies, hawthorns, briars, and holly branches, is as English as pounds, shillings, and pence, and yet (perhaps I should say therefore) it is equal to anything tenorish in Italian opera. I myself prefer it to *Spirto gentil*, *La donna è mobile*, *Una furtiva lagrima*, yes, reader, even to *Dalla sua pace!* There are many examples of the old English glee form also to be observed and noted. Of these probably the best is *A British tar is a soaring soul* in *Pinafore*. But one of the most indicative signs of the true English spirit in Sullivan is the almost complete negligence (a negligence only emphasized by the few examples such as Mabel's air, *Stay, wand'ring one*) of 3–4 time in his work, for 3–4 time is almost as foreign to the real feeling of England as anything else is to the real feeling of Vienna. *Pinafore*, therefore, is mostly written in common time, just as *Der Rosenkavalier* is mostly written in waltz rhythms.

It does not seem necessary to insist on this point of Sullivan's insularity. Proofs of it are to be met on every page of his work and in point of style it is as silly to compare his music with that of Offenbach or Auber as it would be to institute a

similar comparison between the work of Shakespeare and that of Molière. His early German training, which might have put its mark upon his manner, served only, as best it might, to make of him a thorough musician. In no way is this musicianship more evident than in his treatment of recitative. As recitative almost invariably accompanies burlesque passages in the operettas he goes to the Italians for his models. If you compare Buttercup's entrance, *Hail, men-o'-wars-men,* with the declamation of Donizetti and Verdi you will discover little essential difference. Once at least Sullivan used his vast talent for this sort of joke to effect in a passage which another composer would doubtless have set in quite another way: I refer to Bunthorne's soliloquy in *Patience.*

But for the greatest proofs of Sullivan's inspiration and musicianship, his unflagging vitality, and his unfailing mastery of his material it is perhaps wisest to turn to his concerted numbers, of which, I suppose, the quartet in *The Gondoliers, In a contemplative fashion,* is the most justly celebrated example. This quartet, indeed, is a masterpiece of technical achievement and yet in a good performance difficulty disappears in delight. Beginning in a measured style the music works up to a

polyphonic climax unexampled in light opera.[1] Indeed you will look far to find its rival in serious opera and yet never for a moment does it suggest anything pretentious. Therein lies its charm. Gianetta's air in 2–4 time sung against an orchestra playing in 3–4 time in the opening scene of *The Gondoliers* is another case of which we find an earlier example in the brilliant duet of Frederic and Mabel in the first act of *The Pirates* in which the two sing in 3–4 time while the chorus chatters in 2–4 time. Remember also the delightful treatment of the principals with the chorus in the finale, *This very night*, of the first act of *Pinafore.* These musical feats are not accomplished, as so many dull musicians would accomplish them, at the expense of clearness and amusement. Sullivan had an unerring sense of the fitness of things and when he wrote music of this kind it was always placed where it should be. He never made mistakes. These songs are not the least popular numbers in the operas in which they occur. In-

[1] This quartet really suggests work of the great madrigal period in England, although, of course, madrigals were sung unaccompanied. William Byrd, John Dowland, or Thomas Greaves might have signed this music with profit to their reputations. There are other charming examples derived from the madrigal form in Sullivan's work, notably *Brightly dawns our wedding day* in *The Mikado.*

deed they are always redemanded vociferously.

His capacity for setting words of divers sorts seemed to be endless. When Gilbert offered him a sentimental ditty he bathed it in lovely melody; a quartet, the words of which were relatively unimportant, he treated in a retiary, polyphonic fashion, while he set a comic scene in the extreme of simplicity, emphasizing the words and pointing the wit, to be sure, but never allowing the music to usurp first place. This patter song music, heard without the text, means next to nothing, but the text without the music is about one third as effective as the two in combination. Any of the Savoy operas contains one or two examples of this kind of song. The best, perhaps, are *I am the monarch of the seas* in *Pinafore*, the Major General's song in *The Pirates*, in which a scale is made to do duty for a tune, and, above all, of course, the famous dream of the Lord Chancellor in *Iolanthe*, with its nervous and Freudian accompaniment. Edward's song, *A policeman's lot is not a happy one* and the rollicking duet between Grosvenor and Bunthorne in *Patience* should also certainly be mentioned. In songs of this nature, written in most instances for voices of less than an octave, in which it is impossible to miss a word if the interpreter be capable of decent enunciation,

so crystal is the composer's music, it was Sullivan's plan to make the orchestra speak. Note, for example, the pompous eupeptic self-assurance, the rocking-horse jauntiness of the orchestral accompaniment to *The Duke of Plaza-Toro* in *The Gondoliers.* The Grand Inquisitor's air, *No probable, possible shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever,* in the same work is simply irresistible. Of course the words are excruciatingly droll and the art of the performer counts for a good deal, but the fresh and simple music is so artless in its emphatic rhythm that it seems to bear in its flow the meaning of the catch phrase with which the song concludes. The second air of the Inquisitor, *There lived a king,* is only less good. The legendary nature of the tale sets Sullivan's muse working in the old ballad form. Consequently there is more tune, indeed a bit of florid music for the singer to deliver. There are three musical jokes in the orchestration of this song. On the word " toddy " Sullivan's orchestra imitates a bagpipe. At this passage in the next verse the word is " admiral " and we hear a reminiscence of the hornpipe while at the word " shoddy " in the third verse a scoriac scale does the trick. Of course this sort of thing has been done by every composer from Haydn, who imitated worms, to

Strauss, who imitated peacocks. Moussorgsky's music teems with such effects. By themselves they perhaps mean nothing and are scarcely worth the doing, but in Sullivan's case at least, where they serve to embellish and decorate his inevitably suitable music, they more than justify themselves. Perhaps, indeed, they are useful in keeping the operettas alive, for just such details, which may pass unnoticed at a first hearing, are immensely valuable in reviving an auditor's interest at the second. Examples of suggestive naturalness are not rare in Sullivan's music but three more will suffice. After the words, "And the tar who plows the water" in the trio in *Pinafore* the orchestra imitates the creaking of nautical buckets; in the song, *The Magnet and the Churn*, in *Patience* both churning and scissors grinding are simulated; while the introduction of the flageolet to convey the suggestion of Nanki-Poo's death at the words "the criminal cried" in *The Mikado* is decidedly a forerunner of a similar effect in Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel*. As W. S. Rockstro once wisely wrote, referring to a Sullivan opera: "It overflows with witty passages — passages which would make the words sound witty were they ever so tame. The fun of very clever people is always the richest fun of all. Its refinement is a thou-

sand times more telling than the coarser utterances of ordinary humour. Arthur Sullivan has made every one in London laugh; yet the predominating quality in his comic opera music is reverence for Art — conscientious observance of its laws in little things. It may sound absurd to say so, but no one who takes the trouble to examine his scores can deny the fact. . . . His treatment of the orchestra shows an intimate acquaintance with the nature of its instruments and a genius for their combination such as few contemporary masters have surpassed."

Sullivan's father was a bandmaster, and when he was a lad of eight, so the legend runs, he inveigled the members of his father's band into letting him try their instruments, with assistance and instruction in each case. At fourteen, therefore, he was capable of performing on most of them and this familiarity with the instruments themselves proved of immense service to him in colouring his scores. His use of the oboe and the bassoon is especially to be noted. But, although his instrumentation is delightful, and often fantastic, it never obscures the voice of the singer or diverts the mind of the listener from the words. Sullivan never forgot that he was writing operetta. His method of work was interesting. He orchestrated

a piece only after he had attended several rehearsals, only, in fact, after a scene had been finally fixed by the stage director. By that time he had penetrated to the depths of its humour or sentiment and with unerring touch he was able to give exactly the required colouring to his instrumentation.

Gilbert himself was not musical. It is said that he confessed that he knew but two tunes, one was *Rule, Britannia*, and the other he had forgotten. Another story has it that he could not distinguish this air from *God Save the King*. He always had a fear that singers would be bad actors and he especially distrusted tenors in this regard. The story of his first meeting with Sullivan, told by Wells in Gilbert's own words, is worth repeating:

"I had written a piece with Fred Clay, called *Ages Ago*, and was rehearsing it at the old Gallery of Illustration. At the same time I was busy on my *Palace of Truth*, in which there is a character, one Zoram, who is a musical impostor. Now I am as unmusical as any man in England. I am quite incapable of whistling an air in tune, although I have a singularly good ear for rhythm. I was bound to make Zoram express his musical ideas in technical language, so I took up my Encyclopedia Britannica and turning to the word

Harmony selected a suitable sentence and turned it into sounding blank verse. Curious to know whether this would pass muster with a musician, I said to Sullivan (who happened to be present at a rehearsal, and to whom I had just been introduced): 'I am very pleased to meet you, Mr. Sullivan, because you will be able to settle a question which has just arisen between Mr. Clay and myself. My contention is that when a musician, who is master of many instruments, has a musical theme to express he can express it as perfectly upon the simple tetrachord of Mercury (in which there are, as we all know, no diatonical intervals whatever) as upon the more elaborate disdiapason (with the familiar four tetrachords and the redundant note) which, I need not remind you, embraces in its simple consonances all the single, double, and inverted chords?' He reflected for a moment and then asked me to oblige him by repeating the question. I did so, and he replied that it was a nice point and he would like to think it over before giving a definite reply. That was several years ago and he has not reached any conclusion yet!"

The burden of this ballad, the plea of this paper, is not, after all, in behalf of a hearing for Sullivan's music. There has never been a time

that I can remember (I was born after the original production of *Pinafore*) when these operettas were not being performed somewhere.[1] It is rather for more grace and honour in their presentation that I plead. I believe there is no longer a theatre in London devoted exclusively to their performance.[2] In America we have made no attempt to present them on a superior scale since the seasons over which De Wolf Hopper presided. Those seasons, however, will not soon be forgotten.

The inventor of a new form in art, at least in an art which depends on interpretation, must be an unhappy man. He cannot hope that his ideals will be realized; he cannot even hope for a competent performance. In the first place his works are entirely new to singers schooled in more conventional fields; in the second place his own ideas about the methods by which his ideals may be real-

[1] It is an unfortunate fact that the overtures to the operettas do not bear transplanting. They are, for the most part, potpourris of the airs from the works which they preface, without development or working out. Musically they are uninteresting and hardly one of them would stand the test of association with standard works on a symphonic program.

[2] Since this essay was written this defect has been remedied. Revivals of all the Savoy series are announced.

ized are necessarily somewhat vague. Richard Wagner was such a man and it is only since his death that singers have begun to learn how to sing and act his works to the best advantage, although in Wagner's own day it would have been very easy to get a good cast together for an opera by Meyerbeer or Rossini. Sullivan and Gilbert encountered a similar difficulty. They discovered George Grossmith and a few other artists, but for the most part contemporary criticism has not found the highest words of praise for their singing actors.

The difficulty has not yet been solved. Very superior singers with a genuine talent for acting are required for these works, and as vocally their difficulty far transcends that of most other operettas and as the eccentric and ingenuous burlesque devised by Gilbert calls for a style of acting [1] which fits no other works at all it would almost seem as if the solution must be indefinitely postponed. I never saw Grossmith and until I saw De Wolf Hopper I despaired of ever hearing a

1 Gilbert demanded of most of his performers a certain artlessness, a naïveté of expression, uneasily assumed by such professionals as Marie Doro, for example, whose Patience was an artful miss or by Fritzi Scheff, who contrived to make of Yum Yum a *süsse Mädel.*

satisfactory performance of the Savoy operas, which fortunately make some effect even when they are presented by parish church choirs.

Until he assumed the rôle of Dick Deadeye in one of the spring revivals of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas in New York, this singing actor, who is assuredly one of the brightest ornaments of our somewhat feeble stage, had been identified with a species of mountebanking known as American musical comedy. In such middle-class spectacles as *Wang*, *El Capitan*, *Dr. Syntax*, *The Bride Elect*, *Happy Land*, *Mr. Pickwick*, and *Castles in the Air*, he exploited a large bass voice, an original sense of humour, sometimes hard put to it in these elemental pieces to find opportunity for its display, and a capacity for characterization which was seldom allowed freedom to exercise itself, so bent were the librettists on creating a "Hopper rôle."

But in the Gilbert and Sullivan works the Hopper talents at once were liberated. We saw, what a few of us had suspected all the time, that here was a great actor and a great personality, oozing unctuous humour, authoritative in characterization, with almost incredibly perfect enunciation, in short a man who should have been a world figure on the boards. In any other country this

fellow would have found an opportunity to express himself in a state theatre. Considering plays in our own language could one think of a better Falstaff,[1] a better Caliban? At his own game he could have played Sir Herbert Tree off the New Amsterdam stage or even off the boards of His Majesty's Theatre.

The public took great joy in these Hopper performances and what had begun as a Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company (and in many respects a fine one, embracing as it did, Arthur Aldridge, George MacFarlane, and Arthur Cunningham) became in the end a De Wolf Hopper Company which toured America from coast to coast. In all the rôles he undertook, save one, he was successful. The exception was Bunthorne. Mr. Hopper, it was obvious, understood Bunthorne; he understood him but too well. And so he gave what might be called a comment on Bunthorne, a criticism of him, a caricature from the side-lines, so to speak, instead of slipping head first into the

[1] Mr. Hopper has been seen as Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor,* I believe. One of his early successes was as Pittacus Green in the Madison Square Theatre production of *Hazel Kirke.* As General Ollendorf in *The Beggar Student* and as Pausanias in *The Lady or the Tiger* he did some notable acting. Since he left the New York Hippodrome he has appeared as Old Bill in *The Better 'Ole.*

fraudulent super-æsthetic shell, a feat which, after all, his physique would have prohibited.

But every other rôle he undertook in the series he illuminated. His Edward was the drollest figure of a London policeman imaginable; Phil May could have done no better; his frolicsome Lord Chancellor and his perturbed Ko-Ko were pictures to hang in memory's gallery; his Deadeye the most morose and sullen of British tars. I believe that he appeared as John Wellington Wells. Unfortunately I missed *The Sorcerer* [1] at this time. But in no other one of the operas did his genius rise to so great a height as in *The Yeomen of the Guard* in which his Jack Point was an amazing compound of humour, humanity, and pathos.

Alas, Mr. Hopper is now appearing with trained elephants and the greatest musical classics in our language have no proper setting. It would be delightful, indeed, if a theatre could be devoted to them, a theatre in which turn and turn about each Savoy opera would be presented. But as no one

[1] One of my earliest memories is connected with an amateur production of *The Sorcerer* at Greene's Opera House, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. I could not have been more than seven or eight years old, but I can still recall Professor Leo's vivid performance of John Wellington Wells. This was the first Gilbert and Sullivan opera I heard, and it is the only time I have heard *The Sorcerer*.

seems likely to dedicate a theatre to such a purpose I see no reason why the Metropolitan Opera Company should not offer us at least two of them. It will be urged at once that the theatre is too large. To which I reply that it is certainly too large for *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *The Secret of Suzanne;* still these operas or others which require as small a frame are constantly included in the repertory. It may be said that spoken dialogue is lost in this vast temple, but we have heard *Der Freischütz, Manon, The Bartered Bride,* and *Fidelio* performed there without great objection being raised on this score. There are those who will shamelessly assert that the music is too light for so serious a theatre; to which I may respond that the music is no lighter and is certainly as good as or better than the music of *The Daughter of the Regiment* or *La Bohème.* If the objection is to comic songs what shall we say in defence of Beckmesser's serenade, Leporello's catalogue air, or Figaro's *Largo al factotum?* The final opposition would be in the nature of a fear that it would be difficult, or impossible, to provide suitable casts for these operettas without going outside the company, but I should venture to cast any one of them from the Metropolitan roster although I think it might be advisable

to ask Mr. Hopper to make some guest appearances in some of his best rôles, and one in which he has not yet been heard, the Duke of Plaza-Toro.

So far as *Pinafore* or *The Pirates* is concerned there would be very little difficulty. Both these works are travesties of Italian opera of a style with which both audiences and singers at the Metropolitan are completely familiar. Such music as the duet in *Pinafore*, *Refrain, audacious tar* or the duet in *The Pirates*, *Stay, Fred'ric, stay* would meet with vociferous approval in this house. Any one who has heard *Trovatore* could not fail to enjoy *The Pirates*, and it can further be urged in support of this work as a choice that there is very little spoken dialogue in the first act, and still less in the second. Indeed I think there is less spoken dialogue in *The Pirates* than there is in *Fidelio*.

The Mikado has the distinction of being the best lyric drama yet written to a Japanese subject. I make this statement categorically, bearing in mind not only *The Geisha*, but also certain works by Puccini, Mascagni, and Messager. I am no haruspice but I venture to prophesy that *The Mikado* will be sung two centuries after *Iris*, *Madama Butterfly*, and *Madame Chrysanthème* are forgotten. This work, too, is probably the

best opera ever written to an English book; I can think of no possible alternative except *Oberon.*

Iolanthe, too, reminds one of *Oberon* because it is a fairy opera and after *Oberon* the best. It is mountain peaks higher and more important than *Crispino e la Comare* or *Cendrillon.* At the beginning of the overture Sullivan with a horn *motiv* pays a graceful tribute to Weber, and doubtless the music owes much to both Weber and Mendelssohn and yet this fairy music has a grace and a shimmer all its own. The opening chorus is the inspiration of genius. The pastoral interludes in this opera are very delightful, the parliamentary satire as happy as when the work was first produced. I should say that Sullivan lavished more love and care on the orchestration of this work than he did on any other.

The music of *Patience* in some respects is the very loveliest Sullivan ever wrote, but its performance preconizes difficulties quite beyond the powers of a grand opera company. But I should fancy that either *The Yeomen of the Guard* or *The Gondoliers* would be a suitable choice for this theatre. The first work is more serious in intention than the others of the series; indeed the end leaves a frankly melancholy impression, while the orchestration of the second, with its delightful

treatment of the drums, the oboe, and the bassoon, its Spanish and Italian tunes, its opulent musical colour and its very lovely airs for soprano and tenor make it the most brilliant. There is even a number for the ballet. There is, perhaps, an opportunity to study Sullivan's style and methods to better advantage in *The Gondoliers* than elsewhere. From the opening chorus, *Roses white and roses red* to the final repetition of the *Cachucha* it must be confessed that the composer penned a gay masterpiece. Louis Engel speaks with amazement of the thirty musical numbers of the score: "I very well remember that Donizetti once told me that he never contemplated writing more than thirteen pieces for any of his grand operas. But then he lived in less exacting times, when the public was not blasé as they are today and they were satisfied with finding two or three melodies easily sticking to their memory." . . . Certainly nothing like this work can be discovered in the field of operetta. For comparison one must turn to the musical comedies of the eighteenth century Italians or to the best *opéras comiques* of the French. . . . Some day our children are going to ask, and to ask very loudly, why the directors of our opera always do turn to the foreign masterpieces for the lighter works in the repertory while these works of En-

glish genius, the highest musical genius that England has produced, are forbidden entrance.

January 5, 1919.

On the Rewriting of Masterpieces

The question whether it is better to abide quiet and take advantages of opportunities that come or to go further afield in search of them is one of the oldest which living beings have had to deal with. . . . The schism still lasts and has resulted in two great sects — animals and plants."

Samuel Butler.

On the Rewriting of Masterpieces

IN a recent periodical George Moore,[1] in an imaginary conversation with Edmund Gosse, discussed the advisability of rewriting "Robinson Crusoe": "The first part of the story could not be improved but the end is a sad spectacle for us men of letters — the uninspired trying to continue the work of the inspired." And Mr. Moore makes a statement which is all too true, that few read on in the book after Crusoe leaves the island. So it is on the island that he would have him write his memoirs, dying before Friday, "and some admirable pages might be written on the grief of the man Friday, intermingled with fears lest his kindred should return and eat him — Friday, not Crusoe; and Friday true to his evangelization, would bury Crusoe with all the prayers he could remember. . . . Crusoe must not meet

[1] George Moore has rewritten many of his own books. Henry James rewrote all of his novels and tales that he cared to preserve for the definitive edition. On the other hand, Ouida believed (and expressed this belief in a paper published in her "Critical Studies") that once a book was given to the public, it became a part of life, a part of history, and that its author had no right to tamper with it.

with sudden death, rather an accident among the cliffs that would allow him to continue his memoirs from time to time. I would have the last page of the manuscript relate Crusoe's anxiety for Friday, who he foresees will die of grief, and Friday's last act, the placing of the manuscript in the cave hard by the grave, which would be necessary for the completion of the story, for it is the manuscript that explains to the captain of the next ship that visits the island the presence of the skeleton by the grave. The captain's reading the manuscript would have given Defoe an opportunity to evoke a new soul, the captain's. How the poor savage must have grieved for his savior and master! 'Like a dog,' he mutters as he turns the last page."

In reading these lines my mind reverted to a conversation I once held with the sage of Forty-second Street, Oscar Hammerstein, relative to his next production of opera. Oscar's newest idea was that when he again presented opera he should lay as violent hands as seemed expedient on the published texts of composers, transposing, rearranging, adding, subtracting, in order that the entertainment might be made more brisk, more appetizing to the customers. He spoke particularly of *Aïda* in which the principal tenor air occurs a

few moments after the rise of the first curtain, an absurd place for a tenor air in opera, as it is a convention for opera-goers not to put in an appearance until the second act is well begun. *Céleste Aïda*, therefore, in Oscarian opera, is to be sung sometime during the second or third act. He also thought of a rearrangement of *La Forza del Destino*, which he acknowledged was full of pretty tunes, and he reminded me that when he had produced *Les Huguenots* he had imported from his own Victoria Theatre a wire walker who simply transported the public as he threaded his way back and forth on the taut steel during the market scene, diverting attention from the "dull music," how Mary Garden, inserted in the tenor rôle of *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame*, had made that opera first rate entertainment, and again how Odette Valery plus live vipers and boa constrictors had almost made the music of *Samson et Dalila* bearable.

The idea allured me, and seemed, at first thought, novel. As opera is seldom given as artistic entertainment there is no reason why it should be so solemnly conducted. There are times at the Metropolitan Opera House when one expects to hear the gong of high mass sound or Professor William Lyon Phelps lecturing on

Browning. Surely, no need to stop with *Aïda* and *La Forza del Destino*. Think of the expectations the impressario would rouse in the bosoms of anxious auditors as each revival was announced: "What will he do with it?"

The mere announcement that operatic works of art were to be so tampered with would awaken a fierce onslaught of critical condemnation, and yet, on second thought, I realized that this idea of Oscar Hammerstein's was not a new one. He crystallized it into an advertisable idea, gave it the power to compel discussion, but he did not create it. Scarcely any work of art which requires interpretation, play, symphony, or violin concerto, is ever performed exactly as written, and I think it may be said definitely that an opera never is.

Most conductors have found it expedient to tamper with orchestral masterpieces. I am inclined to believe that all of them have. Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven did not write for the modern orchestra and when their music is performed under modern conditions doubtless some liberties should be taken with the text. The weak orchestration of Chopin's piano concertos has been reinforced by many hands. No conductor respects Beethoven. Villiers Stanford tells a story about

Costa: Manns once borrowed the parts of Beethoven's *Mass in D* from the Sacred Harmonic Society. All went well until the *Benedictus* when the trombones did not play. Manns's wrath was appeased by the explanation that the parts were pasted over. By his order the paper was torn off and Beethoven restored. Shortly after the Sacred Harmonic Society gave a performance of the same work and at the *Benedictus* the trombones played. Fury of Costa who had cut them out. Trombones explain that there is no cut.

Costa: "Send for the librarian."

Enter that official, trembling.

"What have you done with my parts?"

"They were lent to the Crystal Palace and Mr. Manns must have restored them."

"You are dismissed!" and he was.

It is only fair to Costa to explain that subtraction was not his whole line of action; sometimes he added: Sir George Grove objected to Costa's tea-garden big drum and cymbals in *Israel in Egypt*.

H. E. Krehbiel wrote bitterly about one of the finest conductors we have had in New York for no other reason than because he added a flute here or suppressed a kettle-drum there. This one-sided battle, conducted with considerable din, would have

been amusing, ridiculous even, but for the sudden death of Gustav Mahler, which gave the matter a tragic aspect, somewhat accentuated by an article which appeared in the "New York Tribune" on May 21, 1911. Reread this paper seems funny but at the time it almost broke up homes. Amusing indeed is Mr. Krehbiel's pompous description of the eupeptic auditors of the Philharmonic Society: "He (Mr. Mahler) never discovered that there were Philharmonic subscribers who had inherited not only their seats from their parents and grandparents, but also their appreciation of good music. He never knew, or if he knew he was never willing to acknowledge, that the Philharmonic audience would be as quick to resent an outrage on the musical classics as a corruption of the Bible or Shakespeare." This was an unfortunate comparison. Probably Mr. Krehbiel himself has swallowed without loss of appetite Mr. Daly's corruptions, Mr. Booth's corruptions, Madame Modjeska's corruptions, Sir Henry Irving's corruptions, and Miss Marlowe's corruptions, and I would be willing to lay an even bet that no member of the Philharmonic Society has *ever* seen a Shakespeare play performed as written by Shakespeare. . . . The dean gave Mr. Mahler credit for too little intelligence. The Bohemian Jew con-

ductor probably was well aware of the fact that many of the grandparents of Philharmonic subscribers had assisted at the burning of witches and yet he would have been the last to advise the continuance of this jolly custom. Striving to reawaken interest in music which had been heard so often, so badly performed that it was received with apathy, he introduced changes, perhaps not always well-advised, but never careless, never for the sake of saving money, and never, I should be willing to swear, did he obscure a composer's intention. Rather he heightened it. Let me continue to quote Mr. Krehbiel to show how far dull pedantry may exercise an ancillary function to blind obstinacy of opinion: "He did not know that he was doing it, or if he did he was willing wantonly to insult their intelligence and taste by such things as multiplying the voices in a Beethoven symphony (an additional kettle-drum in the *Pastoral*,[1] for instance), by cutting down the strings and doubling the flutes in Mozart's G minor,[2] by fortifying the brass in Schubert's C major until the sweet Vienna singer of nearly a century ago seemed a modern Malay running amuck, and — most monstrous of all his doings —

[1] Fancy that, Hedda!
[2] O Sugar!

starting the most poetical and introspective of Schumann's overtures — that to *Manfred* — with a cymbal clash like that which sets Mazeppa's horse on his wild gallop in Liszt's symphonic poem. And who can ever forget the treatment of the kettle drums which he demanded of his players?" Who, indeed?

Mr. Krehbiel gives a highly flattering picture of the lay members of the Philharmonic Society. I doubt if these ladies and gentlemen suffer so keenly as he imagines when the classics are tampered with. At any rate tampering did not begin with Mahler, nor did it end with him, and I would like to wager that I could introduce radical changes in such often played and popular works as the overture to *Oberon*, Beethoven's *Eighth Symphony*, and Mozart's *Jupiter* without their being detected by more than seven or eight persons in an average Philharmonic audience (and this is putting the per cent. considerably higher than seems justifiable), including the lynx-eared dean himself who once, even with a program before him, leveled a half-column of abuse at a man named Prokofieff for having composed a piece which the aforesaid program plainly attributed to Vasilenko.[1]

[1] The curious reader may find a complete account of this

In one of the "golden periods" of opera no respect whatever was paid to the composer. When, for example, John Ebers was manager of the King's Theatre in London, the air, *Voi che sapete* in *The Marriage of Figaro*, was sung variously by the Countess, by Susanna, even occasionally by Cherubino, for whom it was written. It was indeed the custom at this period for singers to do as they liked by operas. When the great Madame Pasta appeared in Coccia's *Maria Stuarda* "scarcely a single part in the piece escaped unchanged," writes Ebers, "so bent were the performers on introducing additions for the gratification of their amour propre." When De Begnis made his London début he chose *Il Turco in Italia* for his vehicle, but all the best parts of *La Cenerentola* were forced into it.

You may read, also, in historical tables and essays, which old gentlemen delight in preparing for us, of the character of the numerous operatic performances that took place in New York in the early nineteenth century, admittedly hodge-podges, airs from this and from that, scenes transposed or omitted. We need only to recall Manuel Garcia's celebrated season at the Park Theatre

contretemps in the "Musical Courier" for December 19, 1918.

in 1825, during which *Il Barbiere* was performed twenty-three times. Does any one imagine for a moment that Rossini's comedy was given as he wrote it? Certainly not; nor were the other operas of this season, which derives its magnificence from the presence of the elder Garcia and the young Malibran in the company. Thereafter, as before, even through the Mapleson seasons at the Academy of Music, operas were presented with due regard for the caprices of prima donnas, the pocket-books of the impressarii. The ignorance of the public was taken for granted. Emma Abbott interpolated the *Lullaby* from *Erminie* in *The Mikado* and Adelina Patti interpolated *Home Sweet Home* in any opera she happened to be singing. And to this day you may hear Frieda Hempel sing *Keep the home fires burning* somewhere in *The Daughter of the Regiment.*

And now that I have touched on Mme. Hempel, running my mind lightly over the repertory of the Metropolitan Opera House, I cannot think of a single opera that has not suffered some change or other, many of them very considerable, and almost all of them advantageous. However I prefer to hear and see the church scene in *Faust* given as Gounod wrote it after the death of Valentin, rather than before as it is in our theatre and

almost everywhere else. Valentin's air, *Dio Possente*, was written for an Italian performance of the opera in London; it is never sung in Paris, but in New York we hear it and as the opera is performed here in French *Dio Possente* becomes *Avant de quitter ces lieux*. It was formerly the custom, and a very good one, too, to omit the ballet; that has been restored at our theatre, but one of Siebel's airs, and Marguerite's spinning song are never heard. Gluck originally wrote *Orfeo* for a *castrato* and later arranged the part for a tenor.[1] In the newer version at the Paris Opéra, the principal singer, with the consent of Gluck, interpolated an air at the close of the first act. This air, until recently, has been attributed to a contemporary composer named Bertoni, and has been held in disfavour. It is certainly not in keeping with the rest of the music of this lyric drama but Tiersot has established the fact that it is an air Gluck plucked from one of his own early operas. However that may be it remains in disfavour. When Marie Delna sang Orfeo at the Metropolitan she substituted an air from *Echo et Narcisse;* Mrs. Homer's custom is to sing the grand air from *Alceste*, which has the disadvantage of releasing the trombones before their outburst in the furious

[1] Now the part is sung by a contralto.

scene of the second act. In Rossini's *Il Barbiere* fate played a considerable part. The overture and a trio were lost; for the first an earlier overture of the same composer serves; for the second sopranos substitute, during the "lesson scene" whatever air or airs suit their voices. Patti and Sembrich, indeed, often gave little concerts at this point in the opera, always singing three or four songs, and sometimes seven or eight. *Lucia* was originally considered a tenor opera, now we only think of it in relation to a coloratura soprano. As a result the last act, which belongs to Edgardo, is omitted and the work is terminated with the mad scene. *Les Huguenots*, also, is similarly mutilated on occasion. As our opera-goers object to arriving at the theatre at six-thirty or seven it has become necessary to cut large chunks out of the Wagner dramas. Sometimes we are given the Norns in *Götterdämmerung*, sometimes Waltraute, but seldom both together. Mr. Bodanzky dropped Alberich out of this drama. I attended his next performance of *Parsifal*, hoping to find the part of Gurnemanz cut out. No such luck. If you examined the Wagnerian scores at our opera you would find many pages pasted together, many lines obliterated with the pen. These changes have, for the most part, been made rev-

erently enough, but Sir Charles Villiers Stanford tells us in " Pages from an Unwritten Diary " that when Richter took the baton at Her Majesty's in London he spent hours putting the parts to *Lohengrin* aright. The hostile apathy of Costa had permitted the orchestra to play from parts riddled with hundreds of the most obvious mistakes. When Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride* was produced at the Metropolitan Opera House it was in a German version, prepared by Richard Strauss, who had even composed the final trio with which the opera ended. But the three most striking cases of rewriting at present on view at the Metropolitan are *Boris Godunoff*, *Oberon*, and *Le Coq d'or*.[1]

[1] Anything into which the human element enters is naturally uncertain. Conductors not only rewrite and cut operas before they perform them; they actually rewrite them *during* performance. It has been the custom of Tom Bull at the Metropolitan Opera House for the past twenty-five years to hold a stop-watch on every act. He has a complete and valuable record of the exact time it has taken each conductor to get through with an act on each separate occasion. Even the same conductor with the same opera varies somewhat on different evenings. The first night Mr. Polacco conducted *Boris* he finished the first act three minutes later than Mr. Toscanini. There is also a record in Mr. Bull's book of a performance of *Samson et Dalila* in Philadelphia which was over *twenty-five minutes earlier* than those conducted in New York by Mr. Monteux. No extra cuts had been made; it was simply a matter of speedier conducting.

In this connection it is interesting to remember that

Besides writing sixteen operas of his own Rimsky-Korsakoff orchestrated *The Stone Guest*, left unfinished by the death of Dargomijski, and with

George Henschel once wrote to ask Brahms if the metronome marks at the head of the several movements of the *Requiem* should be strictly adhered to. "Well — just as with all other music," answered Brahms. "I think here as well as with other music the metronome is of no value. As far at least as my experience goes, everybody has, sooner or later, withdrawn his metronome marks. Those which can be found in my works — good friends have talked me into putting them there, for I myself have never believed that my blood and a mechanical instrument go well together. The so-called 'elastic' tempo is moreover not a new invention. 'Con discrezione' should be added to that as to many other things."

Singers, too, make many arbitrary changes in scores, sometimes because a note is too high, sometimes because it is not high enough, sometimes for the same reason which led Rubinstein occasionally to startle academic hearers with cascades of false notes, because their memories fail them. Brahms may be quoted on this subject also. Because he had a severe cold and dreaded a certain high F, George Henschel wrote the composer asking if he would object if the singer substituted for that note another more convenient one. "Not in the least," replied Brahms. "As far as I am concerned, a thinking, sensible singer may, without hesitation, change a note which for some reason or other is for the time being out of his compass, into one which he can reach with comfort, *provided always the declamation remains correct and the accentuation does not suffer.*" Certain changes of this nature have been made so frequently in certain opera airs that they have become traditional. It is no uncommon thing for an ignorant critic to severely condemn a singer for restoring the original, but infrequently heard, text.

the assistance of Glazunoff he completed *Prince Igor*. Borodine had not written a note of the overture to this work but Glazunoff had heard him play it on the piano so often that he reconstructed it from memory. Another friend of Rimsky-Korsakoff, Moussorgsky, left *La Khovantchina* incomplete at his death. Rimsky orchestrated this opera and the last pages he wrote himself. He made several excisions, which later were restored in a version prepared by Stravinsky and Ravel. In regard to this Mr. Calvocoressi says, "We can see, thanks to the work of Ravel and Stravinsky, that the score (published by Rimsky-Korsakoff in 1883) was little better than a libel. Rimsky-Korsakoff erred in all good faith. . . . Moussorgsky believed anything resembling formalism to be fatal to art; he was as convinced that Rimsky-Korsakoff's idioms and methods were superfluously stiff and conventional as Rimsky-Korsakoff was convinced that *Boris Godunoff* and *La Khovantchina* were uncouth and crude."

Rimsky-Korsakoff called this doing his duty and he meant only for the best. He also considered it his duty to rewrite *Boris Godunoff* and since that work has been performed extensively in the singing theatres of Europe and America a constant buzz of discussion regarding this version of

the work has simmered in the critical kettle. In a conversation with V. Yastrebtsieff, which the latter published in the Moscow weekly "Musica," June 22, 1913, Rimsky-Korsakoff said, "I originally intended writing a purely critical article on the merits and demerits of *Boris Godunoff* but a new revised pianoforte score and a new orchestral score will be a more eloquent testimony to future generations of my views of this work, not only as a whole, but as regards the details of every bar; the more so, because in this transcription of the opera for orchestra, personality is not concerned, and I am only doing what Moussorgsky himself ought to have done, but which he did not understand how to carry out, simply because of his lack of technique as a composer. I maintain that in my intention to reharmonize and reorchestrate this great opera of Moussorgsky there is certainly nothing for which I can be blamed; in any case I impute no sins to myself. . . . Only when I have revised the whole of Moussorgsky's works shall I begin to be at peace and feel that my conscience is clear; for then I shall have done all that can and ought to be done for his compositions and his memory."

Boris was successfully produced at the St. Petersburg Opera, January 24, 1874, but Mous-

sorgsky had been working on it for several years and had made many changes, thanks to the advice of friends. The two Polish scenes, with the character of Marina had been added, and the scenes in the inn and in the Czar's palace had been much expanded. However the opera did not hold its place in the repertory although it was occasionally revived, and was not performed outside of Russia. In 1896 Rimsky-Korsakoff's version appeared. Since then none other has been heard, or seen for that matter. Moussorgsky's original score seems to have been supplanted and it is impossible to be certain whether the composer of *Scheherazade* did well or ill by him. Montagu-Nathan admits that Rimsky seems to have " toned down a good many musical features which would have won acceptance today as having been extraordinarily prophetic." Stassov was opposed to the alterations. " While admitting Moussorgsky's technical limitations," writes Rosa Newmarch, " and his tendency to be slovenly in workmanship, he thought it might be better for the world to see this original and inspired composer with all his faults ruthlessly exposed to view than clothed in his right mind with the assistance of Rimsky-Korsakoff. . . . We who loved Moussorgsky's music in spite of its apparent dishevelment may not unnaturally resent Rimsky-

Korsakoff's conscientious grooming of it. But when it actually came to the question of producing the operas, even Stassov, I am sure, realized the need for practical revisions, without which Moussorgsky's original scores, with all their potential greatness, ran considerable risk of becoming mere archaeological curiosities." Arthur Pougin falls in with this theory, "In reality the music of Moussorgsky only became possible when a friendly experienced hand had taken the trouble to look it over and carefully correct it." James Huneker writes: "Moussorgsky would not study the elements of orchestration and one of the penalties he paid was that his friend, Rimsky-Korsakoff, 'edited' *Boris Godunoff* (in 1896 a new edition appeared with changes, purely practical, as Calvocoressi notes, but the orchestration, clumsy as it is, largely remains the work of the composer) and *La Khovantchina* was scored by Rimsky-Korsakoff, and no doubt 'edited,' that is revised, what picture experts call 'restored.'" Calvocoressi contents himself with this laconic statement: "In 1896 a new edition of *Boris Godunoff* appeared, revised by M. Rimsky-Korsakoff. Certain of the changes that one remarks in this have a purely practical end, which is to facilitate the execution; others are only motived by the desire to take away

from the isolated aspect of the work, to render it less disconcerting to the public." But Jean Marnold (in "Musique d'autrefois et d'aujourd'hui") screams with rage: "He (Rimsky-Korsakoff) changes the order of the two last tableaux, thus denaturing, at its conclusion the expressly popular essence and the psychology of the drama. The scene of Boris with his children is especially mutilated. Rimsky-Korsakoff cuts, at his happiness, one, two, or three measures, as serenely as he cuts fifteen or twenty. At will he transposes a tone, a half tone, makes sharps or flats natural, alters modulations. He even corrects the harmony. During the tableau in the cell of Pimen the liturgical Dorian mode is adulterated by a banal D minor. The interval of the augmented fifth (a favourite device of Moussorgsky) is frequently the object of his equilateral ostracism. He has no more respect for traditional harmony. Nearly every instant Rimsky-Korsakoff changes something for the unique reason that it is his pleasure to do so. From one end of the work to the other he planes, files, polishes, pulls together, retouches, embellishes, makes insipid, or corrupts. Harmony, melody, modulation, tonality, all inspire him to make changes. In comparing the two scores one can hardly believe one's eyes. In the 258

pages of that of Rimsky-Korsakoff there are perhaps not twenty which conform to the original text."

Whether or no Rimsky-Korsakoff spoiled his friend's opera I have no personal means of determining. Original scores of *Boris* do not, so far as I am aware, exist in New York. They do not abound anywhere. It may, however, be offered in extenuation of Rimsky-Korsakoff's act that his version has consistently held the stage and has made a tremendous effect wherever it has been presented. The original work may or may not have surpassed its successor but, at any rate, *Boris* as it now stands, is one of the most solid, one of the most striking, one of the most beautiful works in the operatic repertory.

The case of *Oberon* is another thing altogether. Regarding with greedy eyes the success of *Der Freischütz* in London, the Director of Covent Garden Theatre sought a new work from Weber. The composer, near death and anxious to provide for the future of his family, consented to set an English book to music. Two subjects were offered him, Faust and Oberon. He chose the latter, and J. R. Planché prepared the book, sending scenes on to Weber from time to time, who went to the trouble of learning English so that he might

the better understand what he was writing music for. It was felt that too great a strain must not be put on the appreciatory powers of a Covent Garden audience. Other difficulties presented themselves. The singers in this theatre could not act, the actors could not sing. As a result Planché prepared a strange opera book, with plenty of opportunity for a spectacular scene painter (there were something like twenty-one scenes in the original version), in which there was a great deal of spoken dialogue, much of it spoken by characters who never sang a note! Weber with true fatidical spirit wrote to Planché, "The intermixing of so many principal actors who do not sing, the omission of the music in the most important moments — all deprive our *Oberon* of the title of an opera, and will make him unfit for all other theatres in Europe." Nevertheless, deeply inspired by the subject, Weber completed the work, intending to rewrite it for a broader public later. But *Oberon* was produced in April, 1826, and Weber died in London in June of that year, before he had time to carry out his intention.

There the matter stood. Weber had composed one of his finest — I may say that I consider it by far his finest — operas in a form which made it

simply unpresentable under any but the original circumstances. Since that day it has seldom, if ever, been performed as written. Huon's first air proved unsuitable to the voice of Braham, the tenor who created the rôle, and Weber wrote a new air. In the early German performances the original air was substituted, and soon music for the recitatives was provided. Berlioz heard Schroeder-Devrient sing Rezia in a performance of *Oberon* in Paris four years after the London production. The Théâtre-Lyrique, under Carvalho, mounted the work in 1857. Sir Julius Benedict prepared an Italian version, adding certain airs from *Euryanthe*, cutting much of the original play, and providing music for the recitatives, for London in 1860. Wüllner, Josef Schlaar, and Gustav Mahler are others who have arranged the work for practical operatic production. Mahler's version was heard at Cologne and when he was in New York he vainly urged Heinrich Conried to produce it at the Metropolitan. Up to 1918, however, no version had been regarded as definitive, unless it might be that of Sir Julius Benedict, which has many disadvantages. However in England and America in the mid-Victorian period *Oberon* was a favourite opera. Tietjens sang Rezia and Alboni sang Fatima; later Pappenheim

and Parepa-Rosa sang Rezia (often spelled Reiza) and Trebelli sang Fatima. The work, however, had never been heard at the Metropolitan Opera House, until Arthur Bodanzky prepared his version. There were probably many excellent reasons for this delay aside from the lack of a definitive version, if any such lack were felt. The opera calls for a great number of elaborate scenes, including the representation of a storm on a rocky coast, fairy festivals, and caliph's banquets. Obviously expense is involved. Then the music demands, for its correct interpretation, not only voices of great range, but consummate art. The part of Rezia is beyond the reach of many a dramatic soprano, and tenors might sing Edgardo, Radames, Canio, and Rodolfo all their lives without being able to get through the first air of Huon.

Mr. Bodanzky rearranged the text in nine scenes, omitting several of the characters whose dialogue was spoken, and providing music for the others. This music is in every instance provided from themes found in the work itself. The final chorus, for example, is arranged from the tenor air which Weber was obliged to write for Huon. The result may be regarded as generally admirable for Mr. Bodanzky's work has the effect of knitting

together the very lovely music of the piece. Assuredly *Oberon* has the ardency of true beauty. The overture and Rezia's grand air are familiar in the concert room, but how much more effect both make in the opera house! For *Ocean, thou mighty monster* scenic embellishment is more necessary than for the final scene of *Die Walküre.* And the overture, with its foreshadowing of the fairy music, Huon's chivalric air, and the quartet, *Over the dark blue waters,* comes back to memory with renewed force and meaning after the fall of the last curtain. Indeed I like *Oberon* almost as much as the operas of Gluck and Mozart and a good deal better than the lyric dramas of Richard Wagner.

The third rewritten opera in the repertory of the Metropolitan Opera House is given in its new form in direct opposition to the intentions of the composer and against the protests of the composer's widow. It is amusing to recall that the composer is Rimsky-Korsakoff and that after his death he has been served as he served others.[1] In this instance, however, the music and the book escape revision. The alteration concerns solely the manner of interpretation.

[1] This is the second instance. *Scheherazade* was not written as a ballet and the composer's program for this music differs in every respect from that of Fokine.

Rimsky-Korsakoff completed *The Golden Cockerel* (given in New York in its French form as *Le Coq d'Or*) in 1907. The censor refused to sanction its production and it therefore did not reach the stage before the composer's death in 1908. Later, however, it was performed with success in Russia. It is, perhaps, the quaintest and most beautiful of Rimsky-Korsakoff's many operas. Sometime before the summer of 1914 Serge de Diaghileff, the director of the Russian Ballet, searching for novelties suitable for production by that organization in London and Paris, hit upon this work, and, with the assistance of Fokine, upon a novel presentation of it. This was a performance involving two casts, one to sing and the other to act (if this idea had occurred to Planché all the original difficulties in regard to *Oberon* might have been brushed aside). The singing cast, together with the chorus, was arranged in uniforms on two tiers of benches on either side of the stage, leaving the centre of the stage free for the ballet to enact the play.[1] Consequently, after a first

[1] This idea does not seem to have been entirely new. In Lumley's "Reminiscences of the Opera" I find the following: "On the English stage, where the double qualities of acting and singing were in those days not to be found combined in one person, a tenor-lover was introduced *to sing* the music of Gustavus (in Auber's *Gustave III*), whilst the

gasp of amazement the spectators soon accepted the singers as part of the decoration and followed with glee the history of the silly King Dodon and the amazingly naughty and mysterious Queen of Shemakahn. The fairy story lends itself well to this manner of treatment, the work was mounted in the most fantastic and absurd manner, and the result was a success which surpassed all expectations. Looking for novelties for the Metropolitan Opera House for the season of 1917–18 Mr. Gatti-Casazza hit upon *The Golden Cockerel*, which was produced with the aid of Adolf Bolm, the London King Dodon, as nearly as possible after the manner of Fokine. The result astonished and entertained nearly everybody, except a few old fogies who seemed to feel that entertainment in an opera house was sacrilege.

These three operas, indeed, *Boris Godunoff*, *Oberon*, and *The Golden Cockerel*, are assuredly

part itself was *acted* by Mr. Warde, a tragedian of considerable merit. A similar arrangement of an operatic work had long before distinguished the English version of *The Barber of Seville*, in which the part of Almaviva was enacted by a light comedian, whilst an additional character, one Fiorello, sang Rossini's music of the part." One may go still further back. In Orazio Vecchi's *Amfiparnaso*, an attempt to turn the *Commedia dell'Arte* into lyric drama, produced at Modena in 1594, the music was sung by five singers *behind the scenes*, while the action and speech of the actors on the stage was synchronized with the music.

the most delightful works in the current (1918–19) repertory of the Metropolitan Opera House. I should be the last to point the moral herein indicated. There may, indeed, be some operas which do not need rewriting. The fact remains that the creative power and a sense of the stage do not often go together. As Sir Charles Villiers Stanford so justly remarks, it is a mistake to prolong the *Elijah* after the ascent of the fiery chariot. "When a piece is over it is over." This is a lesson Wagner never learned. His motto seems to have been, When a piece is over it is just beginning. Will some one, I wonder, have the courage to lop King Mark's speech off the end of the second act of *Tristan?*

But while we are rewriting masterpieces why not go into the matter with thoroughness. Why not engage J. M. Barrie to write a new book for *The Magic Flute?* Why not engage Mr. Belasco to cut and contrive and comb a single opera out of *Mefistofele* and *Gioconda?* The idea is fascinating. I should delight in doing a little snipping and rearranging myself. I have a fancy, for instance, for playing *Il Trovatore* backwards. Something like this:

The opera opens with the scene of the prison into which the wicked count has thrown the gipsy

Azucena. She and Manrico sing the duet, *Si la stanchezza*, after which Manrico obliges with *Di quella pira*. Leonora enters and vainly pleads with the Count to spare Manrico but that one, being a baritone and jealous of the tenor's high C, orders him to be put to death at once. The audience, taking into account the way *Di quella pira* is usually sung, will be properly grateful, but the horrified Azucena informs the Count that he has murdered his own brother. Here the scene changes and Leonora sings the *Miserere*, aided by Manrico, now happily in heaven, but whose spirit obligingly appears in the tower.

The second act opens in the camp. Azucena, dragged in, sings her plaintive lament for Manrico, and Leonora, stricken with grief, immures herself in a convent. She is carried away by the count, who also learns that Azucena has lied about the burned Manrico, who was her own son and not his brother. The act ends with the anvil chorus in which all the principals ecstatically join.

In the third act Leonora, hearing singing in the garden of the Count's palace and in her madness fancying the voice that of her dead Manrico, ventures out into the moonlight. The voice, however, proves to be that of the Count di Luna, but Leonora has reached a state of indifference and

falls into his arms in a magnificent state of bravura while the Count delightedly comes to her aid with some of Manrico's music transposed into as comfortable a key as possible.

Other ideas present themselves. The example of *Le Coq d'Or* should make it possible to continue indefinitely the enormous vogue of Madame Farrar, who might act her rôles unrestrained while somebody else sings them. . . . And if any more American works are to be given at this house might I suggest that Mr. Irving Berlin be called in to rewrite them?

January 1, 1919.

Oscar Hammerstein: An Epitaph

"There are two ways of not keeping on a level with the times. A man may be below it; or he may be above it."

Arthur Schopenhauer.

Oscar Hammerstein: An Epitaph

I

SOME years ago, passing by the northwest corner of Forty-second Street and Seventh Avenue, I observed a short stubby figure of a man with a thin greyish Mephistophelan and slightly rakish beard lounging under the lintel of one of the doorways of the old Victoria Theatre. He wore a morning coat and grey trousers and large soft-leather shoes. His toes were turned out at a wide angle. His linen was immaculate. On his head reposed a very French top hat and in his mouth, which frequently assumed a quizzical expression, was a large black cigar. The eccentricity of the figure was apparent at first glance, but magnetism and a certain Napoleonic magnificence raced in as second impressions. It was my first week in New York and I was curious; I asked another newspaper man for a label.

"That," replied my friend in his most fatidical manner, "that is Oscar Hammerstein."

II

It was the autumn of 1906 and I was a reporter on the "New York Times"; he was just opening his new Manhattan Opera House. Later in the round of my duties I approached him and as was his wont he almost at once familiarly addressed me as "Mike." People he liked were sometimes Mike. People he didn't like he didn't talk to and they were often pilloried on his coarsest wit in a manner not reportable. He motioned me to follow him and I did so. I had heard of Mr. Belasco's magnificent apartment, laden with spoils of the Ming period, tables upon which Marie Antoinette had written letters to the Chevalier Gluck, fans which had brushed the ether across the face of Lola Montes, mantel-pieces which had formerly belonged to the Duchesse d'Orleans, and footstools upon which the Abate Metastasio had sat at the feet of La Romanina. Perhaps I expected this other great man of the theatre, of whom I had heard so much, to be similarly installed.

We walked through the old Victoria Theatre, gilded, but shabby, dusty, and dingy, and always crowded. The smoke of countless cigars and cigarettes obscured the atmosphere. On the stage

it is possible that acrobats were tumbling, perhaps the Brothers Bard, whose rhythmical feats always awakened wonder and admiration in me, or it is possible that Bert Williams was telling his cat story. You remember how the Negro bishop forced to put up for the night alone in a haunted house, sitting before the fire was visited by pussies, first a tiny tabby, then a large maltese, then a full-sized feline, then a gigantic bristling Tom, then a cat as big as a leopard, then a cat as big as a lion. And always each new visitor seated itself next to the last with the same remark, "We can't do nothin' till Martin gets here." The point of the story, of course, was that the bishop decided not to wait for Martin. However, I did not look at the stage on this occasion but followed the short figure, walking, as I remember him, always with his toes very far out, flat-footed, and with rather short steps — he must have been nearly sixty at the time — up the sordid marble staircase of this temple of varieties. He paused for breath at the balcony landing and then took a wide detour round past the boxes, and went on through a doorway into a little room. Here he again paused, sat down, and motioning me to another chair, began to talk at once about his new operatic venture.

The room was a little larger than a hall bedroom in a New York boarding house. The paper on the walls was soiled and torn; a window looked into a dismal courtyard. There were no pictures on the walls but there may have been calendars or maps. There was a desk, littered with papers and books and boxes of cigars and ends of cigars. There was a year's dust spread all over this congeries, save for a square where Oscar evidently did his work. There was a grand piano, piled with music, music-paper, scores, more boxes of cigars, more books, more letters, more cigar ends, and more dust. The piano was open and the rack contained a sheet of music-paper upon which a few hieroglyphics had been scribbled. There were two or three ordinary office chairs and one arm chair with broken arms and the upholstery losing its stuffing. The floor was heaped with boxes, letters, manuscripts, books, and music. Through an archway I perceived another room, a brass bed, the sheets in disorder, a bureau. Nowhere order, nowhere cleanliness, except in Mr. Hammerstein's person which was immaculate. It was apparent that the man allowed no menials to disturb in any way the plan of his domain, fearing, no doubt, the accidental destruction of some choice bit of information which he had carefully stowed

away in the coal scuttle or flung with memory into some corner. Here Oscar Hammerstein did all his work and, at this time, lived. Here he received visitors, social and on business. When the Manhattan Opera House was built his sons prepared for him there a series of magnificent rooms furnished with gilded chairs and tables, ormolu clocks, bronze andirons, Tudor trousseau chests, and Carrara marbles. Certain hours in the mornings Oscar consented to use these rooms. He held conferences with Campanini on these red carpets and he sometimes signed contracts with singers there, but the room in the Victoria remained his home. He said that at night, when he couldn't sleep (and he seldom did sleep more than four hours during the twenty-four), he could go out on the fire-escape and watch the busiest corner in New York. He was lonesome on Thirty-fourth Street and the place was too clean and fussy. When, some years later, the old Victoria was practically demolished to make the new Rialto, Oscar clung to his nest as long as he could, although at this time he was living with his third wife in an uptown apartment and only used the place as an office. He was finally ejected, I think, by a sheriff's order, at a time when nothing but the sky covered his head and his walls hung over a preci-

pice. Remembering all the conversations, amusing and otherwise, I have had in that little room with him who was always known as the " old man " I can only say that there is a certain pain in my heart when I think that those days are no more and can never return again.

III

Oscar Hammerstein built the Harlem Opera House, the Harlem Music Hall, the Columbus Theatre, the first Manhattan Opera House, which stood where Macy's Department store now stands, the Olympic (the block of theatres now comprising the New York and the Criterion), the Victoria, the Republic, the Harris, the second and more familiar Manhattan Opera House, the Philadelphia Opera House, the London Opera House, the Lexington Avenue Opera House, and probably three or four more theatres that I have forgotten. He discovered Harlem; he discovered Forty-second Street. The newspaper wits of the day called the Olympia " Hammerstein's Folly." Longacre Square, now the centre of the theatre district, was then quaintly restful, " uptown." He ran this theatre as a continental music hall and even introduced the promenade as a daring feature in imitation of

a similar feature in the London and Paris halls. He had arrived in America in the seventies a penniless immigrant and it was through his ingenuity in inventing machinery which eventually revolutionized the cigarmaking industry that he made his money. It is said, indeed, that he is in a measure responsible for the present great scope of the industry. Before he died he had patented over one hundred inventions bearing on the manufacture of cigars. But he always cherished an ambition to give opera. Late in life he once remarked, "The tobacco business is prose. Opera is poetry. It's more fun to make Melba sing than to make cigars." The Harlem Opera House was the scene of one of his earliest experiments with opera. Lilli Lehmann sang there for him. It was there, I think, that he gave one of the first American performances of *Cavalleria Rusticana.* Although he soon dubbed the work, with his characteristically somewhat coarse wit, *Cavalleria Busticana,* from that time until the day of his death, opera was his only real interest and he tried persistently and courageously to make it a successful and popular form of entertainment. But he never gave up making cigars; he was making cigars, I would be willing to wager, the day before he was taken to the hospital. He frequently wrote

comic skits for the German papers (he was a German Jew, born in Berlin) and he also wrote a good deal of music, some of which has been published. Once he wagered $500 with Gustave Kerker that he could write an opera, words and music, in twenty-four hours. Locked up in the Gilsey House, to the sound of a hurdy-gurdy which Kerker had engaged to play under his window, he won the wager. The opera, which was subsequently produced, is the worst on record, probably even worse than *Le Vieux Aigle*, another impressario's opera.

But to me, with all this as a vivid and alluring background, which occasionally, very occasionally, furnished material for lively conversation, for it was not this man's habit to talk of the past, Oscar Hammerstein stood for the Manhattan Opera House, in which during three seasons (I was in Paris one of its four years) I enjoyed performances of opera as I have never enjoyed them before or since. The scenery and costumes for these operas were often cheap and tawdry, not because enough money had not been spent, but because taste in this direction was not one of the man's virtues; it was the spirit of the performances that was unforgettable.

It was Oscar's invariable habit to sit on a

kitchen chair in the right entrance near the proscenium arch. He invariably wore his peculiar top hat; he invariably, in defiance of the fire laws, smoked a long black cigar. And I think we all believed (I know we all said often enough that we believed) that it was his presence that gave the performances their *dash*, their *élan*, their *sparkle*, their tremendous *vitality*. Opera was *exciting* at the Manhattan Opera House; there is no better word to describe it. It seemed, indeed, as though in his presence the singers were trying to do their best. The fact was, of course, that he knew good performances and enjoyed them and he knew bad performances and criticized them. His criticism was sharper than that of any of the professional critics. It sometimes took the form of getting rid of some singer who had outlived his usefulness but this was usually accomplished in some playful manner.

The list of operas he produced was in itself remarkable and New York may never hear or see French opera given so perfectly again. *Carmen*, the first season, was a foretaste of joys to come. *Thais*, *Pelléas*, *Louise*, *Sapho*, *Grisélidis*, *Le Jongleur*, *La Damnation de Faust*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, all received their due, some of them more than their due. Nor was Italian opera ne-

glected, and if you heard *Don Giovanni* at the Manhattan Opera House during the first season you heard the best New York performance of the opera in recent years. Then there were *Salome* and *Elektra*. . . . How many singers he introduced to New York: Mary Garden, Luisa Tetrazzini, Alessandro Bonci, Maurice Renaud, Mariette Mazarin, Jean Perrier, Hector Dufranne, John McCormack, Charles Dalmores, Amedeo Bassi, Emma Trentini, Mario Sammarco, Jeanne Gerville-Réache. . . . It is a matter of record that he stimulated the rival theatre to make great efforts; the Metropolitan Opera Company, too, offered brilliant seasons during the four years of the Manhattan. But surprises, which Oscar loved, were lacking on Broadway. His constantly active brain was continually devising new plans, new sensations. After Chlotilde Bressler-Gianoli had sung Carmen for nearly a full season, he suddenly engaged Emma Calvé for a few performances. Once Mary Garden was successfully launched he brought Luisa Tetrazzini to America at the height of her meteoric career in London. He put Mary Garden in the tenor part of *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame*, first securing Massenet's consent, and later he substituted a tenor for a performance or two. He introduced a snake charmer into

Samson et Dalila and a juggler into *Les Huguenots*. . . .

IV

There never has been any one like him; there never has been a theatrical manager, an operatic impressario (unless it was Richard Brinsley Sheridan) who came within a mile of his eccentric greatness or his great eccentricity. There was, if you will, P. T. Barnum, at whose name I cannot well scoff. Barnum was a world famous figure. Even today his name is probably as well known in Europe as that of any living American. But P. T. Barnum was a Yankee and a Yankee business man. All his ventures beginning with dime museums and ending with Jenny Lind, were money-making schemes. Like Hammerstein he was a colossal self-advertiser, but there comparison must end. For Oscar Hammerstein was a mystic Jew, or a Jewish mystic. He had his ideals, such as they were. He was an artist; not a writer, not assuredly a musician, although he loved music and was some judge of singing, but an artist in life. He had no desire to make money except to spend it, and he spent it, mind you, not to make more money, but to further his gigantic projects,

for from the beginning they were always gigantic. His personal wants, however, were meagre. He was accustomed to lunch or dine on a glass of milk and a box of biscuits. He smoked constantly but he never touched intoxicating liquors. There was a time when he frequented a certain corner in the white room at the Hotel Knickerbocker but he did not go there for the food; he ate at most a plate of tomato soup. He went there to be seen. He was, indeed, on such occasions the centre of an admiring group. He understood such adulation, he knew exactly how much it was worth, but he was not above courting it. Once, when for the time being he seemed entirely bereft of occupation he said to me rather sadly that in the future he would be left pretty much alone. "No one has any use for a man who has quit work," he assured me. "You can't make money out of him any more."

Late in life he owned a motor and when his leg began to trouble him he sometimes found it expedient to use it. But at the height of his career it was his custom to travel in a street car. Often to go from the Victoria to the Manhattan he would stand on the corner waiting for a Seventh Avenue car. It was in a street car, indeed, that occurred his famous meeting with a former chorus girl, who had worked for him at the Olympia. The con-

tractor who was building the Victoria had warned him that day that, unless he raised a certain sum of money by noon, work on the structure would be discontinued. He has told me that he never felt more disconsolate, more discouraged than when he boarded the car . . . to go nowhere, merely to be alone to think. He knew that he could not borrow from any bank, from any business man. "Is Hammerstein crazy," people had asked, "after the failure of the Olympia to build another theatre in the same block? No one wants to go so far uptown to be amused." The chorus girl recognized him but he did not recognize her. But she saw that he looked downcast and crossed the aisle to speak to him, to sit down beside him. In a moment he had told her his troubles; they were all he had to talk about. But how easy; she had had a stroke of luck, was affluent, had money in the bank. Could she help him? . . . The Victoria eventually made more money than any other of his many theatres.

I have described his personal surroundings; he never bought anything so far as I could see. I never have met him in any kind of a shop. Most of the music and books around him had been given to him. I do not think reading was one of his habits, but for a man who read little he was aston-

ishingly well informed. One thing only he desired and it was this that he was always seeking; he wanted fame; he wanted to be considered a public benefactor; he wanted to be talked about as the man who had done more for opera in New York than any one else. In a way he had his wish; in a way he had his successes, many of them, although I believe he was never satisfied. He occupied more space in the newspapers than any other American of his time unless it was Theodore Roosevelt. He made millions of dollars and lost them. It was impossible for him to retrench. At a time when the Manhattan Opera House was losing money he built the still larger Philadelphia Opera House.

He liked to write music and he probably considered himself a composer. He wrote a good deal of it, dreadful stuff that never would have been heard, had he not been in a position to command a hearing; in this respect he was like a king. His favourite opera was *La Traviata*. He has often told me that he felt there was more sentiment and beauty in the last act of Verdi's opera than in all of Wagner. This was not bad taste. The last act of *La Traviata* is shop-worn, perhaps, but we recognize its faded loveliness. But one would not expect the admirer of the last act of *Traviata* to appreciate and engage Mary Garden, to produce

Pelléas et Mélisande. That is what I mean when I say that Oscar Hammerstein was in his way an artist, an idealist. He had a certain kind of gnosis. Before his time impressarios had avoided novelties so far as they were able; he opened new doors and stimulated public curiosity. In Maurice Grau's day the announcement of a novelty was assurance of an empty house; now it is the assurance of a full one. To Oscar Hammerstein is due this new condition.

In some strange way all his own he understood voices and singing. He used to say that all he wanted was to hear a singer once and he could tell whether he (or she) was good or bad. Not all the singers he engaged were good, but their average quality was very high. He certainly had a flair for knowing what the public wanted.

He could be arrogant and hard; he was always egotistical and selfish, and yet to a certain degree he drew men to him and he was extraordinarily human in unexpected ways. I happen to know of an instance in which a trusted employee (all his employees were trusted to the most absurd degree; he never took the time or trouble to watch anybody working for him; his suspicion was all directed towards those working *against* him) defaulted. He did not prosecute the man. He never spoke of

the matter at all, but I afterwards learned that the man was ill in a hospital and that Hammerstein was footing the bills. He could be charming although he seldom could be persuaded to talk about anything but himself and his own plans. Perhaps he lacked a sense of humour but he had an amazing wit; there are a thousand recorded examples of that. Some one, indeed, should collect them and call the collection "Hammersteiniana." Sometimes this wit was coarse but it frequently hit its mark. Of all the clever things I remember he has said I think I prefer his reply to the invitation to dine with the directors of the Metropolitan Opera Company after they had bought him out for a period of ten years, the tragic ten years. This reply was one line long, a line written in long hand, for in his busiest years he never employed a secretary although a stenographer sometimes copied some of the longer statements he prepared for the newspapers. "Gentlemen," so read his letter, "I am not hungry." Letter writing was one of his major talents.

His arrogance, his pride, his egoism assisted him to success; he allowed no obstacle to stand in his way. They also caused his downfall. He sometimes scolded the public for not being better cus-

tomers. He refused backing unless it was made unconditionally; he occasionally, doubtless (although I do not know this to be true), asked rich men for money, but he asked it as Beethoven would have asked it, to consecrate his own ideals. He scorned advice and he never would submit to working with other men, or with a board of directors. That, indeed, he could not do.

He shared one fault with all other impressarios I have met. Singers were only great when they were singing for him, or if they were going to sing for him. And if they drew large salaries without drawing large audiences he lost his enthusiasm. There is a story that he paid a certain tenor, only half of his salary for singing in *Cavalleria Rusticana*. "You have only worked half the evening," was his explanation! He could be bitter and cruel. His treatment of a famous soprano, who appeared a few times at the Manhattan Opera House, was perhaps not chivalrous, but to him it was natural. She, too, is dead now. Most of his singers were loyal to him. Mme. Melba and he were great friends. He quarreled with Mary Garden but she called to see him only a few weeks before he died. Almost his last words to me were about her: "She does not know," he said, "how

great she is. She knows she is greater than any of the others, but she does not know how much greater."

His philosophy embraced all subjects; he even had a philosophy in regard to free tickets for his theatres. "I like to give a man passes when my theatre is crowded," he said. "Then I am doing something for *him*. If I am asked for seats when the house is empty, the asker makes me feel that he is doing something for *me*."

He was interested in women; he was married three times. He liked to talk to women; he enjoyed bantering with them. A clever woman, I think, interested him more than a clever man. And I think only women fooled him; men he saw through.

He was never too busy to see anybody whom he wanted to see. He never kept newspaper men waiting. If he conducted long arguments with Campanini and his singers he must have done so between midnight and dawn. For four years I saw him nearly every day and I do not remember that he ever kept me waiting. It was part of his greatness that he never seemed to be busy. He always had time for a long talk.

V

The last ten years of his life he was slowly dying; there were times when he seemed to have some realization of his fate, when discouragement sat heavily upon him. He was ill when the contract was signed in which he pledged himself not to give opera in New York for ten years and he never recovered. He tried in various ways to avoid the issue. He gave opera in London, in a new house, in a new district and quite typically he instructed the architect to carve his portrait in stone in one of the lintels. He imported a light opera for the Manhattan Opera House. These ventures were failures. Indeed, all his life, his ventures were failures; it was characteristic of his ideas that they were too big to succeed. Only the Victoria, his vaudeville theatre, made money, and that never interested him. Next he planned a circle of theatres for cities like Cleveland and St. Louis, each of which was to be exactly alike so that he might carry an opera company and its scenery from one to the other in rotation. He submitted this scheme, which he had prepared in detail, even having an architect draw up the complete plans, to the Boards of Trade in the various cities, but although

in some instances much interest was shown, the project fell through. Then, counting on a somewhat vague promise of certain directors of the Metropolitan Opera Company that he might give opera in English before his ten years expired, he built the Lexington Avenue Opera House. It is probably the ugliest house he erected; his taste in such matters was execrable, but its brilliant acoustics are a matter of record. These, he assured me, were no accident, but the result of his experience in building theatres. In the concrete foundation of the balcony and orchestra pit he had caused powdered glass to be sprinkled. All of his later theatres had fine acoustics, which leads me to believe that he had solved a problem which has always puzzled architects, the solution of which, indeed, is usually left to chance. "My first theatres were failures acoustically," he said. "There was a bad echo in the first Manhattan Opera House. I benefited by my experience and now I thoroughly understand the subject of acoustics and its relation to theatre building."

He was not destined to give opera at the Lexington Avenue Opera House. He never, indeed, entered its doors. His bitterness and sorrow regarding his loss of this house tinged his talk for many months.

With the changes in the old Victoria Oscar moved to a dingy room on the second floor of a building across Forty-second Street. On the third floor he had rigged up his cigar-making machines, and he continued to experiment with his inventions. Also I think it was his habit to make most of his own cigars. Any man who does creative work knows the advantage of having some such occupation which leaves the mind blank but satisfies the nervous fingers. Less than a year ago, I think, he moved again, this time to a room on the first floor of a building on West Thirty-eighth Street. Again he installed his machines on the floor above. Not many people, I fancy, went to see him there, but I made it a habit to drift in every month or so. About six months before his death he had in a measure recovered his health. He was the old Oscar Hammerstein, buoyant and enthusiastic. He planned to give opera again; he was surrounded by scores, libretti, prospectuses, and blank contracts. His conversation fairly bubbled with witty and often coarse shafts. It seemed to me that in 1920 the Metropolitan would again find him a very dangerous rival.

Thither I repaired to see him one hot day about three weeks before his death. His office was open

but empty; a man from above called down to demand what I wanted. "Ask Mr. Hammerstein," I said, "if he will see Mr. Van Vechten." In a few moments I heard a limping step on the floor above. Then the familiar figure appeared at the top of the stairs and came slowly down, very slowly. His foot was worse; he was in pain, severe pain, I could see that. He led me into the office and sat down, heavily, hopelessly. He was tired, sick, worried. The long ten years were over in April, but he could not hold his Manhattan Opera House open until then; on the other hand the lessee was not sure that he could give him the house in April. Suppose he had a success installed there. . . . Difficulties, difficulties, difficulties! Matters of no moment to the man of forty, fifty, and sixty, but hard to bear for the man of seventy, ill, discouraged, alone, as the man of genius is always alone. We spoke of Mary Garden. We spoke of many things, but he was vague, hopeless, tired, dying. . . . Yes, I knew he was dying. I knew the end had come. I knew that he would never give opera again. I shook his hand and he asked me to come again soon but I knew as I walked away that I never would. I felt that I had lost something and that I would never find it again. So when I heard that he had been taken to the hospital and lay at

the point of death I was not surprised. His death did not shock me when it came. . . .

It was not in Oscar Hammerstein, I think, to inspire affection. His way was too big, his egoism too colossal, his genius too evident. These qualities made men stand a little away from him. A few, indeed, disliked him; a few, alas, derided him. To some, even, who did not know him, he was a trifle ridiculous. He was never ridiculous, however, to those who knew him; his dignity was too perfect; he was even, in a sense, magnificent! He could and did command admiration, admiration for the things he accomplished, more than that, admiration for the way he failed. He was not, as a matter of fact, what is called a good loser. He groaned and moaned over loss, but in a few days the board was erased and with a clean piece of chalk he was drawing a new diagram, making a new plan. I admired him; more than that I liked him. He was a figure, he lived his own life; he fashioned it sometimes with difficulty but he always carved it out. He was an artist; he was a genius. I have met few men who have seemed to me as great. Some day, I hope, his statue will stand in Times Square. He would like that.

August 3, 1919.

La Tigresse

" I have circled the world almost twice and I have seen so much beauty that the memory of it is like a panorama of glory upon glory. I have seen the wonders of the drive from Sorento to Amalfi; the majesty of the drive over Mt. Diablo in Jamaica at dawn; the tropical splendours of the drive from Colombo to Kandy in Ceylon; and I have stood on the edge of glaciers in Switzerland awed at the picture spread before me. I have seen Stromboli sending a flame of fire hundreds of feet in the air at night while its river of fire ran down the volcano to the sea below; and I have sat in the old Greek theater in Taormina, Sicily, 8,000 feet above the earth, and gazed on Mt. Etna in the distance lifting itself 11,000 feet over the Ionian sea; I have watched the sun turn sapphire sea and azure clouds to vermillion, as it went down on this glorious scene. These and many more wonders of God's earth have I beheld, yet nowhere have I found any other spot which seemed to me to combine so much beauty, comfort, convenience, and charm for the enjoyment of simple and wholesome life as Short-Beach-on-the-Sound at Granite Bay."

Ella Wheeler Wilcox: " The Worlds and I."

La Tigresse

A New York Night's Entertainment

I

NEW YORK, of all the cities of the world I have lived in, delights me most, I think. Some cities I always dislike; some, like Florence, I find agreeable for a week or a month at a time, but there is a shifting grace about Manhattan like the changeless changing pattern of the waves of the sea, which is persistently and perennially attractive. Then there are overtones, which awaken memories, and these confront us everywhere. When one is in Paris one is in Paris; when one is in Amsterdam one is in Amsterdam; when one is in Siena one is assuredly nowhere but in Siena; but one may be in New York and a great many other places simultaneously. Shut away from your sight the buildings that surround the Public Library and you are in Imperial Rome; further up Fifth Avenue certain millionaires have reminded us very forcibly that there are châteaux on the Loire; the Giralda Tower of Seville looms in leafy Madison Square, "Diana's wooded park," as O. Henry lovingly called it, and nearby the

Venetian campanile pierces the sky; a little removed on Fourth Avenue there is a very fair copy of the Torre del Mangia in Siena; where Canal Street strikes off from the Bowery in the heart of Jewry the sweeping colonnades which preface the Manhattan Bridge are obviously suggested by the colonnades of St. Peter's in Rome; the arch of Titus guards Washington Square; the Swiss chalets which serve as stations for the elevated railroads remind us that the Swiss Family Robinson lived in a tree; the Town Hall of Verona decorates Herald Square; there are buildings on Lafayette Street and on East Forty-third Street obviously inspired by Venice; on East Broadway between brick tenements and loft buildings, smart brick houses with white doorways, marble steps, and handwrought iron railings may take us back to London or New York of the fifties; at different seasons of the year violets or roast chestnuts are vended on the street corners after the manner of Paris; a veritable Egyptian pyramid caps a building on Nassau Street; here and there one catches a glimpse of a Dutch façade; the night sandwich wagons awaken thoughts of London coffee stalls, including Neil Lyons's immortal "Arthur's"; the lovely eighteenth century city hall, perhaps the most beautiful single building in New York, is sur-

rounded by sky-scrapers, like a Taj Mahal in a valley dominated by mountain peaks, in the unrelated turmoil of City Hall Square; and now the war has set a camouflaged battle-ship with fighting turrets in the centre of Union Square, otherwise a wilderness of moving picture houses, saloons, and burlesque theatres, and at several points at street intersections or in parks Swiss chalets or Iowa farm-houses have been erected in which the Salvation Army or the Knights of Columbus dispense hot coffee and doughnuts and the "Saturday Evening Post" to soldiers and sailors. If these incongruities cause no comment, awaken no excitement, compel no shrieks of astonishment, it is because the note of incongruity is the true note of the island; nothing is incongruous because everything is. In a city where one finds a Goya Apartment House, and an Hotel Seville it is no surprise to discover that an avenue has been christened after Santa Claus! New York is, indeed, the only city over which airships can fly without appearing to fly in the face of tradition. If a blue hippopotamus took to laying eggs on the corner of Forty-seventh Street and Broadway every day at noon, the rite would pass unobserved after a week.

So in New York, as others have pointed out, it is

possible to eat in seventy or eighty different styles: in Spanish restaurants on Pearl Street, on the sidewalk, after the fashion of a hundred European cities, on Second Avenue, in Rumanian style on Forsythe Street, the food of the Syrians on Washington Street, Turkish or Armenian fashion on Lexington Avenue, Swedish fashion on Thirty-sixth Street, Russian fashion on Thirty-seventh, German on Fourteenth, Hawaiian on Forty-seventh, Jewish on Canal, Indian on Forty-second, Greek on Sixth Avenue, and French, Chinese, Negro, Italian, and American everywhere!

So cosmopolitan is New York in the matter of cookery that no bizarre appetite should go unsatisfied; *gefüllte fisch* or venison, bear steak or bird's-nest soup, snails or alligator pears, *pirogue* or *halvah*, *tass kébab* or *tel kadayif*, are all to be found somewhere. And in these strange restaurants, all so foreign to the spirit of America, and all somehow so *right* in Manhattan, all bearing nostalgic breaths of the homelands to certain frequenters, strange adventures occur, a thousand unchronicled episodes happen in a night. And it is well to remember that New York is the city where John Masefield worked as a barman, where Harry Thaw shot Stanford White, where P. T. Barnum first exhibited white elephants and aged

Negro women, and where later he became the impresario of Tom Thumb and Jenny Lind, where Adah Isaacs Menken, the lady who wrote "Infelicia" and who in her impersonation of Mazeppa was bound to the back of a horse which dashed madly over the canvas crags of the New York stage, lived at what later became the Maison Favre, where Nick Carter worked and Van Bibber played, where Gorky was refused hotel accommodations and Marie Lloyd was held at Ellis Island, where Theodore Roosevelt, returning from a journey round the world, drove up Broadway in a triumphal procession like an emperor in his chariot, where Emma Goldman, William Dean Howells, Theodore Dreiser, Victor Maurel, and David Belasco have their homes and do their work. In short a subtle, banal, charming, vulgar, adorable city which has seen more civilizations in fifty years than Rome in the whole extent of her career, a palimpsest of human impressions, a seething furnace of every passion, every desire, a congeries of every race, every creed, stratum after stratum of new birth growing from the old.

The incidents, the facets of New York life are so various, the implications and the suggestions so multiple, that no novelist has as yet been able to set down a satisfying picture of them; if any did

succeed the life would change while he was writing his book and what he had written would seem, when published, as strange and as old fashioned as an account of the times of the early Dutch settlers or the picturesque careers of the pirates and conquistadors. There is something of Dickens's London even in the London of today, but if you look over any New York novel published ten years ago you will find it already old-fashioned.

Gaze down any street on the East Side in the late summer afternoon; watch the setting sun play havoc with the tangled clothes lines with their waving burdens, stretched from the red brick tenements on one side of the street to those of the other, the patterns of flags, the iron fire-escapes, the thousands of human figures in black, white, red, orange, and green, and a perfect Turner canvas is mirrored in your retina. Walk down Wall Street or some adjacent tiny lane on some Sunday when the district is deserted and you will seem to be alone and lost at the bottom of some horrific canyon. Stare at the golden heights of the Woolworth Building in the bright sunglare and whether you are reminded of a glittering mountain peak or the aspirational architecture of a cathedral your thoughts involuntarily turn towards God. Stand in the mauve-blue of a New York twilight in

the centre of Madison Square and gaze at the rose-grey tower twinkling with lights as it melts into the soft cerulean vault above. Or walk up Broadway in the evening, Broadway decorated with a thousand illuminated designs in as many moving colours to catch the eye, and try to think of anything else but Sinbad's Valley of Jewels! What does it all mean? How can I or any one else correlate these impressions, force them into a common note, adapt them to the form of a fictional symphony with somebody else, something else forcing himself, itself into the picture at every corner, making it more and more difficult, impossible indeed, to adjust sensation, to weigh impression, to ascertain what one has seen, to describe what one has seen at all?

In New York then, which Henry James has called "the long shrill city," it is best to enjoy one sensation at a time, to shut out all the others, and while you are doing this you may find yourself believing that no other exists, so complete in itself is each of its sides. You may spend your time with rich bankers and dine exclusively on Riverside Drive and West End Avenue, go to the Biltmore, the Union League Club, and the Midnight Frolic; you may live in Greenwich Village in a sack (if you are a woman) and be ignorant of the very

existence of Lady Duff Gordon, Hickson's, or Herman Patrick Tappe; you may belong to a theatrical set and haunt the Lambs' Club or the Hotel Knickerbocker; you may be a member of the Academy of Arts and Letters and look down disapprovingly on all other artistic and literal activity; you will even find if you have the habit of a certain table d'hôte that that table d'hôte in a sense limits your life and if you change your dining habits a feeling of freedom, of enlarged perspective is the immediate result.

Alas, both for my career as a private citizen and my career as a writer I find it impossible to limit myself. I wish to dine with a bishop and go to the theatre with Manon Lescaut or Moll Flanders; I wish to dance with the Duchess of Marlborough and to talk with Polaire; I cannot get along without knowing Peter Whiffle but it was equally important to me at one time to know Chuck Connors. I never met Steve Brodie. I regret it. I did know Sweeney, but Sweeney is a long and different story. I am not acquainted with Edward Bok. I am sorry. I once dined, however, with Mary MacLane and I have been introduced to Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont, although she, doubtless, has forgotten the incident. . . . And so I feel that I shall never be able to do New

York justice: I love her too much and I am too inconstant to any one part of her. From her feet in the Battery to the hair of her head in the Bronx I lavish my caresses unsparingly and gregariously. And if I do not linger with her heart and head it is only because I am too sure they are always there.

II

It was a sweet sight, the tall ungainly young blond French savage in his naval uniform, very naïve and delightful, standing to sing in the crowded and somewhat ribald café. He had been asked to sit at our table and to consume a little of the red wine of California, and when some one suggested that he sing *Quand Madelon* he got up to do so at once as if there were no other course open to him after having accepted our hospitality. His high pitched and unresonant organ produced a sound wholly unrelated to the art of singing as it is generally understood but he knew the words and he continued to deliver verse after verse in his quaint school-boy manner lifting now his right arm, now his left.

"*Quand Madelon vient nous servir à boire. . . .*"

The buzz in the café ceased and began again,

ceased and began again, ceased and began again. Jean-Baptiste (why are all French peasants named Jean-Baptiste?) continued:

"*Quand Madelon vient nous servir à boire. . . .*"

Was this the twenty-first time? When he reached the stanza about the caporal,

"*Un caporal enkepi de fantasie . . .*" we felt we had listened long enough for the sake of politeness and went on with our conversation, but Jean-Baptiste went on with his song,

"*Ma-de-lon, Ma-de-lon, Ma-de-lon . . .* "

"It is a better war song than America or England has produced," Peter Whiffle was saying. "Both words and music are better, far, far better than those of *Over There* or *Tipperary.*"

"It is very long," I commented.

"*Elle rit, c'est tout l'mal qu'ell' sait faire . . .*" sang Jean-Baptiste and suddenly, quite as suddenly as he had commenced, he finished, and sat down to drink more of the red wine of California in the most complete silence. For he had sung all the verses he knew and unless some one asked him to repeat them, which doubtless he would willingly have done, he could do no more for us. Eventu-

ally, however, Peter Whiffle, observing that the boy seemed out of our circle, took him in again with a question,

"*Qu'est-ce que tu fais au pays?*"

Jean-Baptiste was priceless: "Sometimes we have rabbit stew. When my sister was married we had rabbit stew. For weeks beforehand we caught cats on the roads, in the fields, in the barns. My brother caught cats and I caught cats, and my father caught cats; we all caught cats. We caught forty cats, perhaps fifty cats. Some were Toms, some were females with kittens inside them. Some were black and some were white and some were yellow and some were tabbies. One cat scratched a big gash in my brother's face and he bled. Then we locked them in a room, my father and I. . . . My brother was afraid after he had been scratched. . . . We went into the room with cudgels and beat about us, beat the cats on the head. For an hour we chased them round the room until all the cats lay dead on the floor. How they did howl, and screech and fight, but we were a match for them. Then my brother and my mother skinned the cats and made a magnificent rabbit stew for my sister's wedding." . . . Jean-Baptiste lapsed into complete silence again, reverting to his glass of red wine.

La Tigresse

It was growing late. A few sailors with their girls sat about the remaining tables chatting and drinking and the proprietor, a great figure of a man with shaggy eyebrows and the moustache of a villain of tank melodrama, glowered from behind the counter. A young fellow occasionally tapped melodies out of the piano, American tunes of the day and night, and occasionally some of the sailors tried to dance, hobbling about, destroying rhythm and women's footgear in one enveloping gesture.

The place brought a memory back which I sought to recapture. Some past fragrance blew into my nostrils; some vague analogue presented itself. . . . There is a certain street in Antwerp where sailors are deprived simultaneously of their virility and their money, a long winding street near the wharves with house after house consecrated to one purpose; in the evening the windows, some of them with tiny square bulging Belgian panes, are brilliantly lighted, but each of these windows is carefully curtained and only a chance shadow occasionally exposes the lewd interior to the passer-by . . . a shadow or some fat figure on a doorstep, a slousy hussy, or a sleek procurer with greasy moustache and eager eyes. Occasionally a café interrupts the rhythm, a café where fat Belgian molls and drunken sailors, English,

French, Swedish, and American sailors, make some pretence of gaiety . . . but this film quickly faded from the screen. The scene about me was utterly different in suggestion. Perhaps it was the perfume of one of the women, and perhaps it was the way the sailors danced, but suddenly it all came back to me . . . how once I had spent a quiet and delightful evening in a bourgeois café in the Batignolles quarter in Paris. There had been some singing, a great deal of talking, an immense amount of smoking and drinking, and it was both *convenable* and cheerful.

The entrance of a pleasant looking little woman interrupted my revery. She wore a plaid skirt and a flannel blouse; her frousy hair was surmounted by an unfashionable turban. Her figure was inclined to be steatopygous. She was forty and she had a number of gold teeth. But her eyes were dark and piercing, and her smile, as she turned to bow to one of my companions, was divine. I must have looked a question for he said at once,

"That is *la Tigresse*."

"*La Tigresse?*"

"I don't know her real name. Every one here calls her that. She lives upstairs and usually appears about this hour in the morning. You should hear her sing. She's very remarkable."

We asked her to sing but some time elapsed before she did so. She passed from group to group, asking the sailors questions about their homes, about their lives at sea, about the women they knew, about Paris. But such questions about Paris as I heard her ask seemed to be confined to two quarters, those of the Batignolles and the Bat-a-clan. When she finally came to sit with us I was struck at once by her essential dignity, her reserve, her poise. She spoke of the war and her beautiful France and she spoke of the *apaches* but she was always interesting, always delightful, always to a certain extent a personage. She had, indeed, thoroughly aroused my curiosity before she consented to sing at all.

It was two o'clock. The crowd had thinned to two groups. The *patron* yawned behind the counter. The pianist had gone home. Suddenly *la Tigresse* arose and backing into the middle of the room, hands in the pockets of her skirt, she began to sing without accompaniment "*Quand je danse avec l'homme frisé*," which related the history of a preposterous *béguin* in a frank and ribald manner. The tune itself had the self-conscious impertinence of the Boulevard Sébastopol. Her hips swayed, her eyes flashed fire, her voice bawled out the tones. She became, indeed,

immediately a different person and I recognized the artist in her at once. What fervour! What animation! What power of characterization! What sensuous appeal! With one song she had already evoked an atmosphere and she continued her magic, singing now comic songs about simple Belgian visitors to Paris, now tragedies of the water front, and then the dark and gloomy Seine flowed under the nocturnal bridges before our eyes and the vice and sordid misery of the rats who haunt the quays came between us and the reality of the café. Lower and lower she dragged us with unfailing effect, through the streets of Ménilmontant and Belleville. Bibi and Toto and Bubu and the others stalked across her red and purple canvas. They loved and killed and died. And in contrast to these sordid histories she sketched lighter pictures of Paris smiling, tiny *midinettes*, saucy *grisettes*, and flamboyant *cocottes*, Madeleine of the Olympia Bar, or Célestine of Maxim's, or Angélique of Pagé's, the love adventures of little Mimi Pinson on her way to work, overtaken by a shaft from Eros, shot from the window of a warehouse by a *beau gars*. And all these were painted with sympathy and understanding. The characteristic gesture was never wanting, nor were humour and pathos. I don't know how much this

would have delighted me in the theatre, but in this small semi-deserted room, with a few French sailors as background, it seemed the finest and most finished art. Red champagne was brought and as it bubbled in the glasses *La Tigresse* sat down to help us drink it.

"Who and what are you?" I asked in some awe, no doubt expecting her to answer Mephistophela or Astarte.

"*La Tigresse.* . . . Have you never seen my name on the posters in Paris?" And she talked freely of her triumphs in the small halls around the Châtelet and in the Batignolles quarter, her advance to the Scala and even La Cigale, where her successful representation of a *femme cocher* had caused the defection of the beautiful Idette de Bremonval.

And now she was here, forgotten, singing in a cheap American haunt of French sailors and taken by them with less gusto than they would have awarded to the commonest Coney Island diva. Our applause, I thought, must have come to her as a great boon, giving her a delight she had not felt for a long time. And yet from her appearance and manner as she sat at our table I could not make out that she was in any way excited.

"The woman is a find," I said to Peter. "She

should have a great success here if we could arrange some drawing room appearances for her." And as we talked over the possibilities, a great pity surged into my heart, a pity for her warm but unfashionable apparel, the signs of her poverty.

We went back again and again to hear *La Tigresse.* She always came into the café about one o'clock and she remained until the place was empty. Sometimes she simply tied a skirt around her nightgown, stuck a few pins into her hair, drew on stockings and low shoes, threw a black shawl over her broad shoulders and descended. Sometimes she wore the costume in which I had originally seen her, but each night she had a new repertory; each night she delighted us with new songs. Curiously enough, it seemed at the time, our praise never upset her dignity or demolished her poise. She was pleased but never excited.

Peter and I met one day for action. We decided that something must be done. We agreed that French songs, no matter how good they were or how well they were sung, would make no effect in our music halls. I recalled, indeed, but too well the failure of Yvette Guilbert on that sad afternoon at the Colonial Theatre on Broadway. Even a "recital" in Æolian Hall did not seem

practical. But we thought that *La Tigresse*, in her plaid skirt and flannel shirt waist might be gorgeous in somebody's drawing room after dinner. It was to be her rehabilitation. In time, indeed, she might return to Paris, to her old place in the music halls there. And so we dreamed and planned.

One night, after *La Tigresse* had been particularly wonderful (she had led three *apaches* to the guillotine and four *gigolettes* to bed) it occurred to us to talk to the *patron* about her, and we called this grave-faced peasant, this big brawny man from the South, over to our table to discuss the matter.

"It's about *la Tigresse* we want to talk," I began.

"*La Tigresse*. . . . Well, there she is."

"Yes, what can be done about her?"

"What do you mean . . . what can be done about her?"

"We want to get her some work . . ."

"Work! *La Tigresse* won't work. She doesn't want work."

We looked rather astonished, but I persisted, "But surely if she were better known she could make some money . . . she could buy herself some clothes . . . she . . ."

At last the *patron* understood. And understanding, he began to laugh. Huge guffaws shook his enormous frame as he rocked back and forth. He shouted and puffed with mirth. The tears ran down his cheeks and mingled with the grease of his fierce moustache.

We looked at him in amazement, and so did the few others who remained in the café. At last he felt calm enough to speak.

"You think she's poor, what you call down and out, *la Tigresse* . . ."

We nodded. "Isn't she?"

"Good God! I'm prosperous. I do a good business. I've put away some money, but I'd like to have the money that woman has! She was very successful in Paris and she saved her earnings; then later when twilight was beginning to descend on her talent (it is often very easy for even the *patron* of a café to be somewhat poetic in French) she met an old South American. He gives her all the money she wants and asks very little in return. He doesn't even see her more than three or four times a year because he is always travelling and *la Tigresse* detests to travel. . . . She has a tiara of emeralds; she has her own Rolls-Royce. God, it's funny to think that some one thought *la Tigresse* was poor. . . ."

"Then why," I asked, "why does she dress as she does? Why does she sing for us? Why does she come here at all?"

"It is her life. It is what she is accustomed to; it is what she likes. She was brought up in the bars around the Batignolles and her childhood was a pleasant one. So she comes here to revive the memory. The types are similar, as similar as one can find in New York. If she were in Paris she would live in the Batignolles. Her clothes are no disguise. She is comfortable in them. She always wears them; they are what she is used to. What would you have?"

III

The night was cold. It was after three and the streets were deserted. The cold steel-blue of the sky was sprinkled with stars. It was very still.

I spoke the first word, "So there you are. You never can tell."

"What a wonderful thing to do," Peter Whiffle was saying, as much to himself as to me, "to revert to type in this way, or rather to refuse to relinquish type, to cling to it, to live with it, to caress and love it. She sees no reason for making herself uncomfortable merely because she happens

to be rich, and she is right. You've heard of men who, after they had made their money, bought the old farm back for sentimental reasons, but they never went to live on it. Nobody has ever done this before."

"It's all very well for *la Tigresse*," I replied, "She wanted the Batignolles and if you know what you want you can find it in New York, even the Batignolles. . . . But how are you and I going to revert to type, supposing we want to? What is our type? How are we going to settle back in our middle age into the pleasures of our youth? They have been too many. They have been too various."

Peter turned it over. "I don't want to settle back, and I don't believe you do either. If you do you'll find a nice little white wooden house, very much like the one you were born in, I should fancy, down Union Square way. It's dedicated to the uses of the Salvation Army war activities just now, but even the doughnuts would probably do more to make you remember the old home than the building itself."

"It's too late to go there tonight," I explained, "and tomorrow. . . . Well, I'll think it over."

"You bet you'll think it over!" retorted Peter.

February 17, 1919.

In the Theatres of the Purlieus

" A good title should aim at making what follows as far as possible superfluous to those who know anything of the subject."

Samuel Butler.

I

Mimi Aguglia as Salome

THE great New York public — the public that patronizes Broadway successes, to be exact — plays with the foreign theatre, both its dramas and its acting. Each of its elements may be a sensation for a week or a month, whereupon, like the proverbial doll, it is tossed into the proverbial corner, and, with some of its gloss worn off, it is given to the poor neighbour's child in New Jersey or Colorado. New York can be constant to a play like *Within the Law*, or to an actress like Maude Adams, but the Russian Ballet, which has thrilled and amused Europe for nearly a decade, excited curiosity here for a few weeks and now is completely forgotten. We pull such plums out of the foreign cake as Alla Nazimova or Bert Williams or Bertha Kalich, and, in order to satisfy Broadway stomachs, they are forced to alter the very qualities which made them palatable in their original environment. Bert Williams is no more the player who once delighted and amazed Elea-

nora Duse than Alla Nazimova is the woman who, as Regina, almost outplayed the greatest of Oswalds.

Nevertheless, Broadway seems to continue to call for more. It is fortunate that some of the great foreign actors who have played in New York's minor theatres have resisted its alleged desires, refused the proffered admiration, which certainly is not to be depended upon for any extended period. Why, Broadway even consigned Sarah Bernhardt to the music halls! Mimi Aguglia, who, I am almost convinced, has more genius than any other actress on the stage today, if we except the lyric stage, has fortunately eluded Broadway. There have been rumours from time to time that she would appear in English, a language with which, I believe, she is tolerably familiar, but up to now (and I hope the time will never come) she has not forsaken the darling theatres of the Italian purlieus of New York. She has occasionally, to be sure, invaded Broadway, but such invasions have been accomplished surreptitiously and under the very conditions of her downtown appearances, that is, with an Italian company, Italian stage decorations, and a prompter.

When, therefore, you go to see Signora Aguglia, you go to see her under pretty nearly ideal con-

ditions, with an audience that understands Italian, that admires, nay venerates, her performances, but which does not regard her as a freak, and that primarily attends the theatre to see a play. She appears in pieces by d'Annunzio, Giacosa, Shakespeare, and other authors whose names are not overly popular on Broadway. A curious fact about a typical Bowery audience of Jews or Italians is that it would just as soon see a good play as a bad one. It is even reasonable to believe that these people prefer good plays.

Unless, however, you happen to live in the neighbourhood of one of the theatrical temples which the signora adorns with her art, you will find it difficult to follow her movements. She may, indeed, be playing under your very nose without your being aware of the fact, unless you read the Italian newspapers. As for myself, I have a habit of wandering down unfrequented streets, sometimes in search of a new eating-place, sometimes in search of books; and in these streets, in the windows of hairdressers or macaroni merchants, or displayed prominently on the walls of pastry-shops, which, as any one who has lived in Naples knows, are the Italian clubs, the gathering places for neighbourhood gossip, such as our saloons afforded to our working men until our kindly-disposed government

decided that only rich men should have clubs in this country, you may see posters announcing the "tragica Italiana," and telling you where and when and in what you may see her if you have the desire.

Usually a tour of Spring and Sullivan streets would give you this information if Mimi Aguglia were in town, but recently I was startled by running into an announcement on One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street. If you happen to be a book collector, you may not be unaware that there is a row of old bookshops on this Harlem thoroughfare, running from Eighth Avenue to the New York Central Railroad tracks. A strange place for bookshops this, mingled with the homely life of Harlem, fish and vegetable markets, flashy haberdashers' shops, old and new furniture stores, cheap lunch counters, the Hotel Theresa, Pabst Harlem, moving-picture houses, and drug stores, the windows piled high with scented soaps. The external impression one gets is that Harlem never reads. Nevertheless, several of these bookshops are large, and all seem to flourish.

Walking, then, from a tour of these shops to the Third Avenue Elevated, I passed the Gotham Theatre, a playhouse with which I had hitherto been unacquainted, and discovered that on the fol-

lowing Saturday night Mimi Aguglia would begin her Harlem season with a performance of Oscar Wilde's *Salome*, to be followed by a Sicilian comedy called *Mamma Rosa*. The doors of the theatre were nailed fast, and there seemed to be no way of purchasing tickets in advance, and so on the following Saturday, with those who accompanied me, I was on hand at a little after six to book places, which I secured in the tenth row.

Then we sought dinner in a near-by restaurant, a dinner which I can still recall with disgust; there was a lukewarm, thin, clam chowder which would have passed for dirty dishwater anywhere, a leathery finnan haddie, an inedible chunk of apple pie, weak beer, and unmentionable coffee. I cannot say that I was in the best of humours after this repast. Better dinners have spoiled an evening for me. We had been told that the play would begin at eight-thirty and, as in the theatres of the purlieus there are often discussions about tickets even if you possess checks for your seats, we were in our places by eight-fifteen. The theatre was large and painted a brilliant green, with a great deal of gold decoration. The seats were upholstered in red plush. The chandelier was a gorgeous monstrosity of brass branches bearing, in lieu of fruit or flowers, an infinitude of electric

globes of many hues. There was no heat in this pretty playhouse on this cold November night, no heat at all. The place was icy cold, a cold which the green walls seemed to emphasize. Indeed, I had the impression of being imprisoned in a great green iceberg. We wrapped ourselves tightly in our coats and suffered. . . . The play did not begin at eight-thirty, nor yet at nine; it was indeed nearly nine-thirty before the curtain rose. Meanwhile, a young woman and a young man tortured, respectively, a piano and a violin: an hour of Rossini, of *Hearts and Flowers*, of *Faust*, of *Traviata:* an hour of scraping and pounding and thumping and groping and conscientious din. The audience became impatient, and whistled and stamped and applauded; all to no end, and each separate and good-natured person in this audience knew it would be to no end, for Italians never do anything on time.

Nevertheless, may I state that two minutes after the curtain had risen I had forgotten my bad dinner, forgotten the cold, forgotten the long wait, forgotten the horrible music? Need I say more for the compelling power of Mimi Aguglia?

The audience, as always in the Italian theatre, was delightful. As I have intimated, these people came to see a play, not a shocking drama by a

social outcast named Oscar Wilde, who went to jail for his sins and died a miserable death in Paris. I venture to say that not ten individuals in that crowded theatre, which, by the way, is bigger than most of the downtown theatres, were in possession of any background whatever in regard to this piece. Probably not ten out of fifteen hundred had ever heard of Oscar Wilde or knew anything about the play itself, except that it was a "biblica tragedia" (the program and the posters said so much) and that Mimi Aguglia would appear in it. No hysteria of shuddering repugnance informed this mob, as we have been told informed that other mob which watched and listened to Olive Fremstad in Richard Strauss's music drama one Sunday morning at the Metropolitan Opera House, and which filed out to register a solemn protest against the exhibition in this sacred temple of art of a "toad upon lilies." . . . Young mothers were there with their babes; they suckled them, if nature so demanded. Young girls were there, with lovely black hair and gold earrings; children were there, and grandmothers. They had come to see a play. They applauded Aguglia when she entered; they applauded vehemently at the close of the drama, and recalled the protagonist several times, but they did not rush into the lobby to consort in

strange groups to whisper about its indelicacies. No, to this audience *Salome* was nothing "curious and sensual"; it was just a play.

Of all the conventions of the Italian theatre the prompter, perhaps, is the most conspicuously esoteric to American eyes and ears. He sits in a huge box, like an inverted chariot, in the centre of the row of footlights, which is supposed to conceal him, but often, in his excitement, his head protrudes, like that of a turtle from its shell, or his arms, for sometimes he gesticulates, the book in his hand! In any performance his voice is audible, extremely audible; so that there is a likelihood that you will hear every line of the piece twice, for his office is not to prompt failing memories, but, rather, to give a line to an actor who may not have memorized it before. Therefore the Italian prompter reads every line of the play. I have known instances (the big scene in the fourth act of *Zaza* comes to mind) when the actors in their fury outstripped him by several speeches. But no self-respecting prompter is daunted by such a situation. Conscientiously he continues to read every line, and in time catches up with and even passes by the actors themselves. The effect is curious, and to some people it renders performances in the Italian theatre intolerable. For my-

self, I may say that either I ignore the presence of the prompter entirely, as when the acting is good enough to make me forget it, or else I find myself reflecting on the philosophy of the institution. It is almost, indeed, as if the poet himself were reading his play to the actors, who immediately grasp his lines and transmute them into emotional speech accompanied by gesture. With some such explanation you may easily persuade yourself that the spontaneity and adaptability and real power of the Italian actor far transcend that of the player of any other nation.

In some plays, notably in Sicilian pieces, or in such modern dramas as *Zaza* or *Madame X*, the unnamed (for the program does not list them) thespians that Signora Aguglia gathers around her give a great deal more than adequate performances. They are often atmospheric, suggestive, and emotionally sincere. *Salome*, however, was somewhat beyond the group I saw on this occasion. The page of Herodias, played by a woman in a sort of Viola costume with high gaiters, was a ridiculous figure; Narraboth, a stolid pink body; Herod, an incredible monstrosity in a Roman toga; and Herodias, in a mid-Victorian Greek gown cut low over the shoulders, with a diadem on her head, for all the world like an old print of Mrs.

Somebody or Other as Lady Macbeth. There was, to be sure, a real Negro as the headsman, but he not only had to receive the command given by the playwright, but also whispered instructions as to where to descend, and what to do when he got to the bottom of the cistern. There were no signs of stage direction; I doubt if there had been a rehearsal. The scenery, evidently, had been borrowed from an Italian opera company which had been giving *Aida*, pieced out with stock wood scenes, thrones, etc. Herodias, finding herself without a throne, bade one of the attendants bring her a kitchen chair. . . . The play was considerably and advantageously cut. The Jews did not appear, and the Romans had little to do. Herod's speeches were chopped and hacked to pieces. And yet, bad dinner, cold theatre, long wait, prompter, bad stage direction, bad scenery, bad costumes, bad actors and all, I may say without qualification that this was the most effective performance of *Salome* I have ever seen, and one of the great evenings I have spent in the theatre. And for this satisfaction I must thank Mimi Aguglia.

Of such a performance a mere description of costume, gesture, and voice means very little. By such a process, how could I hope to recapture the electricity of Aguglia? . . . I doubt if Aguglia

herself knows why or how she does certain things. This is one of the most curious phenomena of the art of acting. Given a suspicion of genius, a plan of attack, precision, authority, foresight, and sympathy, and the accidental gestures, or expedient gestures, fall into place and become essential parts of the interpretation. . . . The successor of Faure was not successful in the part of Hamlet at the Paris Opéra. He appealed to his great predecessor: "I have carefully studied you in the part; what have I forgotten to do?" Faure explained: on the opening night, finding his throat clogged at an important moment, he had turned aside and spat into his handkerchief, but to the audience the gesture suggested deep emotion, and it was greeted with a wave of applause. Thereafter Faure continued to do intentionally what he had first done accidentally. . . . So in Salome's long silent scene, between the entrance of the king and the dance, Aguglia's action provoked the most excited comment from us. It was open to many interpretations, but of one thing all of us were agreed, it was absolutely *right*. Salome Aguglia, repulsed by Jochanaan, in the depths of despair, suddenly started and threw back her head when the tetrarch entered. Did this signify merely the breaking of her mood, or did she then and there decide that it

would be through Herod she would be enabled to fulfil her desire? Later, long before she promised to dance, she began to denude herself of her golden chains and her jewels. Had she made up her mind to accede to the king's request, or was she tossing her jewels off absent-mindedly while she thought of the prophet; or was she imagining herself as his jewelless companion in the wilderness? It is possible, indeed probable, that Aguglia thought none of these things. It is very likely that, with the practical carelessness incidental to the Italian theatre, while she was waiting she was preparing for the dance which was to follow. All that I mean to indicate is that these possibly careless gestures became almost great moments in the rhythm of the interpretation.

What a voice the woman has, now rich and full with the notes of the viola da gamba, now petulant and querulous like a clarinet, now rude and raucous like a bassoon! How well she plays on this superior instrument. In her scene with Narraboth he stood well up stage facing the audience. She played the scene with her back to the footlights; her whole effect was made with her voice and the sensuous curve of her spine. So, too, she played most of the following scene with Jochanaan, who by the way, never left the well. The

cistern was built high, so that Salome might lean on it with her elbows while standing, an effect which might be imitated to advantage in more pretentious productions of this play. John lifted himself until his waist line was visible and then stood still, braced by his hands, his lower body concealed, while she played the scene about him. All this was marvellously mellow, marvellously plastic, extraordinarily intriguing, and there was no let-down in the crescendo of this performance.

Aguglia, as Salome, wore a wig of long, red hair and a trailing, transparent robe of tarnished silver, heavily embroidered in jewels. Her feet were incased in stilted sandals. For the dance she removed the outer garment and disclosed herself in the quaintest of gold tissue trousers decorated with the most fantastic bows of tied varicoloured ribbons. Above the bare abdomen she wore a short bolero jacket of gold and tassels. The dance was oriental, and centred in the stomach. . . . She made the first request for the head on a silver platter in a fittingly simple manner, but from then on she absolutely defied tradition. Instead of becoming angrier and more forceful, with each succeeding request she became more careless and childlike, running back and forth from the well, wrapping her veils about her, paying no heed

whatever to the pleadings of the tetrarch, simply reiterating, " Give me the head of Jochanaan," not in a monotonous monotone, not with impatience, but with the ingenuous persistence of a spoiled child. Her antepenultimate repetition of the words was made with such legerity that the effect was almost too great to be borne in the theatre. I felt that the trumpets had blown and the walls of Jericho were falling, or that Samson was pulling the temple down around me. . . . Only the last time was she paramount, and Herod, startled by the sudden change of tone, yielded at once.

The scene with the head was conceived as something elementally sensuous, and was carried through unflinchingly. I suppose a chaste Broadway audience would have been shocked into getting thoroughly drunk in all available resorts before the night following such an interpretation was over. Aguglia had bound herself in a long, blue veil with thick meshes, wrapped it about her head, her face, her shoulders, her breast, and her thighs, but when the charger with its burden was given her the veil fell from her face, and on her knees before the head of Jochanaan she gradually unwound it from her body: the symbol of disrobing was obvious. Then she took the head from the charger and began pushing it about, following it on her

knees from one side of the stage to the other, with little cries of delight, little exclamations of joy, little amorous coos, and finally came the embrace, in which everything was left to the imagination, because nothing was! The death was epileptic, a lesson learned probably from seeing Nijinsky die in *Scheherazade.*

We stayed for the beginning of *Mamma Rosa,* long enough to see a little of a very different Aguglia, with her own black hair, in a peasant dress, walking like a peasant, uttering comic lines in a Sicilian dialect, with an utterly different vocal apparatus, and for the audience this was just another play, and they enjoyed it almost as much as they had *Salome.*

November 28, 1918.

II

Farfariello

ONE day, conversing with a young man who professes to know a great deal about the New York theatre I casually, and perhaps a little maliciously, let slip the name, Farfariello. Who is Farfariello? my friend enquired, not wholly to my surprise, for if a questionnaire in which: Who is Farfariello? was the key question, were put into the hands of an audience at a Belasco première probably not more than two people in the house would be able to make even a vague reply. I doubt, however, if there is a single Italian in New York — and are there not more Italians here than in Rome? — who would not genuflect before the name, the name behind which Eduardo Migliaccio has become *il re dei macchiettisti.*

Come with me on a Saturday or Sunday night, for Farfariello is not to be heard on every night of the week. . . . We are in one of the delightful old Bowery theatres with its sweeping horseshoe balcony and its orchestra sloping gracefully up to the orchestra circle, a charming old theatre of a

kind in which it was possible for the audience to be as brilliant as the play; our theatres today are constructed on the principle that it is more important for the spectators to see the play than each other. . . . The traditions of the house have changed but its picturesque qualities have not been disturbed in the transformation. Now the theatre is filled with all sorts and conditions of men and women, working men in their shirt-sleeves, for it is summer, women with black hair parted over their oval olive faces suckling their babies, or with half-nude infants lying over their knees. Boys in white coats, with baskets of multi-coloured pop and other forms of soda water, pass up and down the aisles, seeking customers, and you see mothers and children, young girls with their young men, grey-haired grandmothers tightly bound in thick black shawls in spite of the heat, sipping the red and pink and yellow pop through long straws directly from the bottles. In a box a corpulent gentleman fingers his watch chain stretched across his ample paunch. All this observed in the smoky half-light of the darkened theatre, for the performance is going on, is to the highest degree picturesque. George Bellows or Degas would begin to paint at once. . . . A man and woman have just finished singing a duet from *The Count of Luxemburg* and

have left the stage. Now, without a second's pause, a deft but coatless stage attendant slips past the proscenium arch and changes the placard of announcement on the easel. The new placard contains a single word:

FARFARIELLO

Violent applause sweeps over the playhouse and perhaps the babies howl a little louder. Then, as their mothers, in an effort to quiet them, rock them to and fro in their arms, the orchestra strikes up a tripping tune and Farfariello appears in evening clothes. He walks to the footlights and announces his first song, *Femmene-Fe*, a trifle about women, with a pretty refrain which he sings with a pleasant baritone voice. This unexpectedly commonplace beginning is one of the subtleties of Farfariello's art. The song over, he leaves the stage; the applause is perfunctory; the crowd knows that it must allow its idol time to prepare himself for his first impersonation. . . . The orchestra stops playing. Chatter simmers up through the smoky atmosphere; the babies are permitted to cry freely; the pop vendors pass back and forth. But the hubbub dies away as the orchestra begins a new tune. A transformed Farfariello enters; from hair to shoes he is a French concert-hall

singer of the type familiar at Coney Island. He has transfigured his eyes; his nose is new; gesture, voice, all his powers, physical and mental, are moulded in a new metal. He shrieks his vapid ditty in raucous falsetto; he flicks his spangled skirt; he winks at the orchestra leader and shakes his buttocks; his bosom has become an enormous jelly. . . . Again he has gone but soon the figure of an Italian patriot appears, a large florid person with heavy hair and moustaches. Across his chest, over his shoulder, and ending in a sash at his hip, he wears the tricolour of Italy. Farfariello paints the man in action: he is for ever marching in parades (the moment when he falls out of step always arouses a hot chill of appreciation in me!); he is for ever making speeches at banquets; he is for ever shouting, *Viva Italia!* Like all good caricatures this is not only a comment on the thing itself, it is the thing itself. And as this portrait is essentially provincial it thereby passes easily into the universal apprehension. We all know this man in some guise or other. . . . Farfariello goes on, singing, acting, impersonating. . . . Perhaps next he becomes a *bersagliere*, perhaps a Spanish dancer, perhaps a funeral director, or a night-watchman, or an Italian nurse-girl. . . . He may sing *Pasquale Basciamento, Rosalina, Patsy,*

Quanno Spusaie Francisco, or *'O Richiamato*, but always at the end he is the iceman. The applause grows wilder and wilder, the shouts more thunderous, as his half-hour dwindles away, and sooner or later, mingled with the *bravos* are cries of "Iceman! Iceman!" this iceman who sings folk-songs of his native land to amuse his customers, who forget their empty ice-boxes while they listen to him. Of all Farfariello's numbers this is the most popular and perhaps deservedly so for to his Italians it suggests both home and the adopted country.

More than any other interpreter before the public — if I except Yvette Guilbert — Farfariello has made his own material, created the stuff in which he works. This is his greatest claim to interest. Like a novelist he goes to the people themselves for his inspiration. His characters are almost all of them typical Italian figures *in America*, not the Italians of Naples, Venice, or Rome, but the immigrant, the Italian as he behaves in his new environment under new conditions, in new occupations. Once having selected his model (or models, for often he combines the outstanding features of a dozen types) he writes his own songs, arranges his own gestures, designs his own costumes, and even *makes his own wigs*. This last detail amazed me when I learned of it. It would

seem that Farfariello, without perhaps having heard of Gordon Craig, is exactly following out Craig's idea of the artist of the theatre who is to *be* and *do* everything. All that remains for Farfariello is to paint his own scenery and write his own music! A practical reason dictated the wig making. He found that for each of his songs he would need a different head of hair and in his early days the price of wigs exceeded the weight in his purse. So he apprenticed himself to a wig maker and worked diligently at that trade all day while at night he sang in the old Bowery concert halls. "Now I can make wigs as well as any one," he says . . . and he can exhibit his collection in proof. His masks, too, which form part of his disguise, are of his own devising. They are cleverly contrived with strips of elastic so that they will not interfere with facial expression. The muscles of his face are as free while he is using a mask as they are when his face is naked.

Eduardo Migliaccio was born thirty-eight years ago in the same small town in Southern Italy where Enrico Caruso was born seven years or so earlier. It is possible he was born in the same street. Such matters are soon forgotten in rural Italy. Coming to America twenty years ago at the age of eighteen he went to work as a clerk in a banking

establishment. At night he visited the concert halls . . . such places as the old Atlantic Garden on the Bowery . . . where for the price of a glass of beer he could listen to some heavy comic or watch the pitiful antics of some bedizened hussy who smiled painfully as she waved her sodden legs. One night he asked the proprietor of such a place how much he paid his entertainers and was told that they earned $8 a week. Migliaccio had a voice and it seemed to him that he might make $8 more easily in a concert hall than in a bank. And so the *re dei macchiettisti* began his career, in a small room behind a Bowery saloon, frequented by his compatriots. At first he sang Neapolitan folk and popular songs, imitating types he had observed in Southern Italy, but although he was successful from the beginning he soon found that his audiences showed their wildest delight when he impersonated some local figure.

And so he gradually evolved them, Italian policemen, Italian nurse-girls, Italian ice-men, bootblacks, undertakers, politicians, bankers, midwives, all the familiar figures of New York's Little Italy, caught first in satiric verse and then completely characterized in costume, makeup, and gesture. Satiric verse, I say, but never offensive. Benevolent good-humour is the keynote of his im-

personations and even his models laugh at the caricatures of themselves. Farfariello completely transforms his appearance for his several rôles. Every detail of his costume is studied, stockings, shoes, neckties, and hats included. His face goes through an alembic; a new nose is added or a pair of shaggy eyebrows, or a complete mask. Each of his characters has a distinct walk, a distinct use of the hands, and his hands are marvellous in their expressiveness. Because scarcely one of his men and women speaks Italian Farfariello has found it necessary to learn at least five dialects. In the past twenty years he tells me that he has "created" (as he writes his own songs, invents his own disguises and gestures this word can be legitimately applied to his interpretations) over a thousand of these characters and at the present time he has a repertory of two hundred and fifty. You will find it difficult, indeed, not to meet new people each time you see him.

His name, Farfariello, came to him accidentally. It is the name of a very popular song which he sang early in his career and which his audiences always redemanded, so often indeed that it became confused with its interpreter and they shouted "Farfariello" merely to indicate that they wanted him to come back and sing another number. In a

short time he graduated from the concert halls and came into the theatres. Now his name in front of the door of any Italian theatre in America — and he has appeared as far west as San Francisco — assures a manager a sold-out house. To the Italians of this country he is as well-known a singer as Caruso, who by the way, is his friend. He occasionally impersonates this tenor and when he is in good falsetto form he is even equal to Luisa Tetrazzini's florid song.

He has been fortunate in finding a musician, Professor Giovanni di Colle, who gives his songs very adequate accompaniments. The music is admirably adapted to the mood of his genre pictures. It has distinction and a certain very delightful if somewhat incongruous eighteenth century flavour. It ripples along pleasantly in runs and figurations, never, however, obscuring Farfariello's intention. It is simply a very charming background.

Farfariello has been wise to refrain from attempting to make a place for himself in an American music hall although he has been invited to do so. It is impossible to think of his songs translated and even in English he would not be understood by the devotees of " vaudeville." His appeal is made directly to the very people he characterizes or caricatures. Almost every one of his types

is present in his audiences every night, and they have some appreciation for the care he devotes to his impersonations, the reverence he feels for his art. His reward is complete understanding, a wave of personal feeling that destroys the barrier of the footlights. It is a reward which is bestowed on few interpreters.

October 14, 1918.

III

The Negro Theatre

WHEN I was twenty-one the wonderful Williams and Walker Company was in full blast and bloom. The two comedians headed a large troupe of blacks and offered musical entertainment in a sense sophisticated but which did not dilute the essential charm, the primitive appeal of the Negro. There were reminiscences of the plantation, reminiscences of the old minstrel days, and capital portraits of the new coon, who was in those days a real figure and not a myth like the new woman, who as Agnes Repplier has pointed out in an amusing paper, has been in existence since the days of Eve. This organization must have travelled extensively, though I saw it only in Chicago, for I remember the posters which covered the South Side fencings and hoardings, picturing Williams and Walker appearing at Windsor, *by royal command*, and Williams and Walker meeting Queen Victoria and the Prince of Wales. I am almost certain that one picture showed us the pair taking tea with royalty, but to this I cannot swear. These were the days of *Sons of Ham* and *Abyssinia*. . . . Bert Williams shuf-

fled along in his hopeless way; always penniless, always the butt of fortune, and always human. He reblackened his face, enlarged his mouth, wore shoes which extended beyond the limits of even extraordinary feet, but he never transcended the precise lines of characterization. He was as definite as Mansfield, as subtle as Coquelin. Duse saw him on one of her American tours and promptly decided he was America's finest actor. His pantomimic powers were great and for their exploitation he relied almost entirely on his eyes and his hands, with the occasional aid of a bracing smile. In his poker game, for example, he developed a scene, without speaking a single word, which was enjoyable even to those spectators who did not play cards. To have heard him sing *I may be crazy but I ain't no fool, The phrenologist coon, All goin' out and nothin' comin' in* or the inimitable *Nobody* was to have heard and seen something as fine in its way as the contemporary theatre had to offer. Tobias Wormwood, Jasmine Jenkins, whatever character he assumed, left us trembling between hysterical laughter and sudden tears. . . . George Walker, on the other hand, the Rastus Johnson, the Harty Lafter, was the spick and span Negro, the last word in tailoring, the highest stepper in the smart coon world. How the fellow did prance in the

cakewalk, throwing his chest and his buttocks out in opposite directions, until he resembled a pouter pigeon more than a human being! And we all shrieked applause until he had varied his walk nineteen times and repeated all the variations. As an Abyssinian monarch, breast, back, arms, and legs bare, a live bronze statue, Walker was a more barbaric figure, but even here his inclusive smile, which disclosed several glittering gold teeth, created a bond between Africa and Broadway. And his unction in *Bon Bon Buddy, the Chocolate Drop!* Supreme unction, I call it! . . . There were other features of these entertainments, Ada Overton Walker, for instance, who later became Aida, who danced as few white women have danced (the cry went, " Ain't she loose? ") and who sang *Miss Hannah of Savannah* and *I want to be a leading lady.* I can't recall these memories without crying. I feel very much the way William Winter must have felt when he thought of Edwin Booth. For George Walker is dead and so is his wife. Bert Williams drifted into the *Follies*, via vaudeville, but either the *Follies* or vaudeville killed him, for the Bert Williams of the *Follies* today is no more the Bert Williams of the Williams and Walker days than I am the Carl Van Vechten of 1898.

The Negro Theatre

In December, 1913, there was a renaissance of the Negro theatre. I do not mean to say that between 1908 and 1913 no Negro companies appeared in our theatres; I do mean to say that no Negro company attracted my attention and my patronage. But in December, 1913, I learned (didn't everybody?) that a certain J. Leubrie Hill was appearing in a piece of his own concoction called *My Friend from Kentucky* with his organization known as the Darktown Follies at the Jefferson Theatre in the New York black belt.

This entertainment shared a fault common to all such enterprises, imitation of the white man's theatre. Mr. Hill evidently believed it necessary to add a dash of tenor, a sprinkling of girls in long satin gowns to his otherwise entirely fresh Negro salad. In due course these ingredients were stirred in. Then the actors on the stage singing conventional hymns to the moon, with accompanying action which Ned Wayburn might have devised, lost interest and the audience became listless and restless. But the greater part of the show was distinctly coon and the manner in which both entertainers and public entered into its spirit was again a great demonstration of a truth which is becoming more and more evident to those who work in the theatre that there must be complete co-

operation between public and actor, that the audience indeed must become an integral part of any successful theatrical performance. The spectators at the Darktown Follies appeared to be enjoying themselves after the semi-hysterical fashion of a good camp-meeting. They rocked back and forth with low croons; they screamed with delight; they giggled intermittently; they waved their hands; they shrieked; and they pounded their palms vigorously together in an effort, which was availing, to make the entertainers work hard.

And the entertainers worked. They certainly did work. In *My friend from Kentucky* some attempt was made to present the Negro as he really is and not as he wants to be on the stage. The first act on a Virginia plantation diffused a general atmosphere of black joy. How the darkies danced, sang, and cavorted. Real nigger stuff, this, done with spontaneity and joy in the doing. A ballet in ebony and ivory and rose. Nine out of ten, nay ten out of ten, of those delightful niggers, those inexhaustible Ethiopians, those husky lanky blacks, those bronze bucks and yellow girls would have liked to have danced and sung like that every night of their lives and they showed it. How they stepped about and clapped their hands and " grew

mad with their bodies," and grinned and shouted. *Then I saw the Congo:*

". . . cake-walk princes in their long red coats,
Canes with a brilliant lacquer shine,
And tall silk hats that were red as wine.
And they pranced with their butterfly partners there,
Coal-black maidens with pearls in their hair,
Knee-skirts trimmed with the jassamine sweet,
And bells on their ankles and little black feet."

Passion and pleasure, pleasure and passion, a wholesome and tantalizing confusion, not at all like Spanish dancing but somehow suggestive at times of the primitive spirit of Spanish dancing.

In good Negro entertainment of this kind there is an inexorable rhythm, like the rhythm of a camp-meeting. Once under way it spreads from side to side of the stage. The separate figures become part of this great rhythm; the scenery and the stage boards take it up; the footlights flicker to it. J. Leubrie Hill reserved his great effort in this direction for the final scene of the piece in a number called *At the Ball* in which each entity of the company turned his body into that of a serpent, and then together they became one enormous

serpent that coiled and recoiled all along its boneless and intolerable length. After the fiftieth repetition of this number the rhythm dominated me so completely that for days afterwards I subconsciously adapted whatever I was doing to its demands.

Night after night Florenz Ziegfeld sat admiringly in a box at this show, drinking in the details of the admirable stage direction, the spontaneity of the performers, their characteristic lax ease, and the delightfully abandoned tunes. Several of these he bought, together with their accompanying action, and transplanted them into his *Follies of 1914*, but the effect was not the same. The tunes remained pretty; the *Follies* girls undoubtedly were pretty, but the rhythm was gone, the thrill was lacking, the boom was inaudible, the Congo had disappeared.

On the evening of March 30, 1914, the now defunct Stage Society of New York, which had puttered and prowled about among minor masterpieces for a couple of seasons, produced a great play, Mr. Ridgely Torrence's *Granny Maumee*. So far as I know this play was the first serious attempt to depict the Negro, from his own point of view. The theme of this piece is set to the chords of Voodoo worship and sympathetic magic. It

shows the proud Negro grandmother disdaining an alliance with white blood. By burning in effigy the white man who has seduced her granddaughter and lynched her son she hopes to expiate the crime of the one and revenge the other. But out of the flames, as the Lord presented himself to Moses in the burning bush, the image of her boy appears to her and she dies forgiving. The sweep of this drama is great; it is a satisfactory presentation of a big theme. Both play and Dorothy Donnelly's superb interpretation of the title part impressed me so deeply, indeed, that I attended the second and final performance the next afternoon. And immediately I was seized with the idea of founding a real Negro theatre, in which Negroes should act in real Negro plays, as the Irish of the Abbey Theatre had produced characteristic Irish plays.

The difficulty, of course, was to secure the plays. The Irish, it would seem, are a playwriting race. The Negroes, it would seem, are not. During my visits to the Jefferson Theatre I had come in touch with a young man, whose name I have forgotten, who had taken a course in the drama with Professor Baker of Harvard. I now bethought myself of this fellow and wrote him to send me some plays. They came, five-act tragedies with Hannibal and

Trajan as heroes, three-act comedies about modern life in Boston and its environs. They did not seem to be about Negroes at all! The young man, when questioned, said he doubted if I could find what I wanted. Events proved that he was right. The educated Negro dramatist has no desire to remind himself or his prospective audiences of the dark days and unpleasant traditions, which he thinks best forgotten. Negroes have written plays, but so far as I can discover these plays have no racial significance; they are, always excepting certain scenes in the Williams and Walker and J. Leubrie Hill entertainments, imitations of the theatre of the white man, and consequently quite worthless. So I was forced to abandon my scheme. It was easy enough to find Negro actors; most Negroes have a talent for acting, but you cannot open a theatre without plays.

But Ridgely Torrence as a playwright had the advantage. Already he had produced *Granny Maumee.* He wrote two more plays, engaged a Negro company, and at the Garden Theatre in April, 1917, he opened the first Negro theatre of the kind, I think, that had been attempted in this country. One of these plays, *Simon the Cyrenian,* is based on the presumption, which has an ironic modern signification, that the cross-bearer for

Jesus was a black man. The other new piece, *The Rider of Dreams* even excels *Granny Maumee* as the ideal of the type of play suitable for Negroes to perform in a playhouse of their own. This play has the true folk-spirit. The subject is somewhat similar to that of Synge's *Playboy* but the treatment is entirely different. The lazy good-for-nothing, dishonest, delightful dreamer, Madison Sparrow, is not only a distinct addition to the meagre gallery of portraits offered us by the contemporary theatre, it is also an essentially Negro character. As played by Opal Cooper it was easily one of the theatrical delights of the season of which it formed a part. These three plays produced, however, there was nothing to go on with and in due time the enterprise came to a halt. Mr. Torrence has published these plays as "Three Plays for a Negro Theatre" but even the title does not seem to have stimulated other playwrights to work in the same field. Three plays for a Negro theatre there are, and, so far as I know, there are no more.[1] J. Leubrie Hill is

[1] Laurence Eyre's play, *Sazus Matazus,* was about Negroes, but seems to have been conceived from the white point of view. It was produced and played for at least a week, but it never reached New York. I do not know that Mary Burrill's interesting one-act play, *Aftermath,* which deals with a Negro problem from a Negro point of view, has been

dead; George Walker is dead; Aida Overton Walker is dead, but something of the spirit of these, something of the dancing and singing life of the Negroes can be seen and heard in the Negro cabarets where, indeed, at times you may prevail on the musicians to give you a "spirtule," incongruously set, to be sure, but wonderfully sung. But the manner of singing Negro songs correctly is nearly forgotten so far as the respectable Negro is concerned. The dancing is becoming Broadwayized and sophisticated; the singing is fast losing its essential style. The Negro, who has suffered so much, wants to forget the old environment of slavery and broaden out into an imitation of white life. One evidence of this is that the richest woman in the Negro colony in New York is the inventor of a lotion which straightens kinky hair. The Negro race has given this country its only valuable folk-music, for the folk-music of the Indians is more or less negligible musically although probably some of it has an ethnological value. This folk-music has been pretty well preserved, pretty well collected, but the art of singing it is passing. A few years ago I heard the Tuskegee singers sing spirituals as if they were Bach can-

performed. It may, however, be added to the short list of plays for a Negro theatre.

tatas; their tone, attack, and phrasing were impeccable and the authentic Negro manner forty thousand leagues away. At the Negro Music School Settlement in Harlem I once heard a young coloured girl sing *Nobody knows de trouble I'se seen* just about as Mme. Melba might have sung *John Anderson, My Joe.* She even corrected characteristic grammatical errors in the traditional text! She undoubtedly would have sung "Nobody knows how much trouble I have seen" if the music had permitted it.

The last time I visited the Jefferson Theatre it had become the home of a stock company. I heard two acts of *Madame X* there, given in imitation of all the worst conventions of Broadway, with pauses and "crosses," etc. The acting was no worse and no better than conventional Broadway acting. The next week *The Yellow Ticket* was to be the bill but while the prospect of seeing a black girl impersonate a Jewish prostitute excited my mirth it did not draw me to the theatre. Nor did I go to see *Othello.* Actors have to act what there is to act. They cannot appear in Negro plays if there is none. But it is doubtful if Negro audiences would go in large numbers to see a characteristic Negro play, the musical play excepted. Negroes as a whole are astonishingly

lacking in race pride. Many of them have succumbed to the effect of white domination: they are ashamed of their race. To be sure Negroes who marry whites are seldom well spoken of by their compatriots but the rich burning race pride of Granny Maumee would be hard to duplicate, in New York at least. Unless Mr. Torrence writes more plays, and other white men follow his example, I am afraid there will never be a Negro Theatre, and if there is one I am sure it will appeal more to whites than to blacks. The Negro will always prefer Mary Pickford to Bert Williams.

February 3, 1919.

IV

The Yiddish Theatre

THE Yiddish Theatre in New York is an institution. Several playhouses present drama in Yiddish all the year round; others give shorter seasons. There are two large Yiddish theatres on Second Avenue; at least two on the Bowery; one on Grand Street; and now the Irving Place Theatre, so long devoted to the Germans, has become a Yiddish theatre.[1] These theatres are large, the prices for seats in most instances equivalent to those in the uptown theatres, the patronage unexampled. Undoubtedly the Yiddish Theatre has made many fortunes. Almost any winter day you may see Boris Tomasheffsky in a fur coat lolling in his limousine before his Second Avenue Theatre. His wife, Bessie Tomasheffsky, controls and plays in a theatre on the Bowery. Some years ago when Max Reinhardt's production of *Sumurun* was brought to America,

[1] Just as this book is going to press the new Yiddish Art Theatre, under the direction of Emmanuel Reicher, has opened the Garden Theatre for the season of 1919–20. I do not believe I have ever seen anything finer in the theatre than the opening production, Perez Hirschbein's *The Idle Inn*.

Rudolph Schildkraut, the original hunchback in Berlin, was playing in New York on the Yiddish stage. An attempt was made to get him to return to the cast and he was quite willing to do so provided the management would pay him his Bowery salary of $2,000 a week. Bertha Kalich, who has graduated from the Yiddish stage, returns to it occasionally, usually at David Kessler's Theatre, where she appears in *The Kreutzer Sonata* and other pieces of her old repertory. Her emoluments on such occasions are said to be sufficiently impressive.

The public that attends these theatres is very avid, extraordinarily captious, and, even from a Broadway point of view, excessively ill-mannered. I have seldom been present at a Yiddish theatre when the house was not so packed that breathing and even sitting became perilous. It is the custom to let the public in through one door; it is the fashion of the Jewish public to come early and stand on the sidewalk or in the small lobby of the theatre until a few moments before the curtain rises. Then there is a rush through the small aperture, figurative biting and scratching, rough handling, hard words. All this is very unpleasant to the outsider. It is no uncommon thing to put

eight or nine or even ten people into a box intended to seat four or six; the attendant squabbles are part of the performance. The French invention of *strapontins* or hinged seats that can be extended into the aisles has not been imported, but those who are standing sometimes sit on the arms of your chair. There is worse to come. If you have dined with a rich Jew you know that you eat better at his house than elsewhere. Jews in New York's Ghetto are equally prodigal with good food. A dinner without five or six courses, even in a poor family, would be considered modest. These people also have a habit of eating between meals; for short street car journeys they require a lunch and they often carry as much with them for a trip from Brooklyn to Manhattan as would see an economical lady traveller on a train journey from New York to Omaha. There is a prodigious amount of eating done in the Yiddish theatres; not alone fruit and candy (usually *halvah*) but baskets of *gefüllte fisch* are disposed of not only in the intermissions but during the progress of the play. Maurice Schwartz, the director of the new Irving Place Theatre, determined to put a stop to this practice, which is disconcerting to any serious auditor, and is almost unbearable to the

casual theatre-goer of another race who happens in. Therefore he allowed no concessions inside his theatre to food-venders and he stationed a man at the door whose duty it was to take food away from people who came in and check it until they went out again. One very old man came one night with his family and a large market basket full of baked fish! This was gently but firmly removed from his grasping fingers. "I've been coming to the Yiddish theatre now for thirty-five years," he protested, "and such a thing has never happened to me before. Will I get it back?" He was assured that his fish would be waiting for him after the final curtain, but it is reported that he did not enjoy the play and left early, saying that he was hungry. I have never heard hissing in the Yiddish theatre but when the action or dialogue on the stage relaxes its interest the audience is extremely inattentive and the buzz of conversation is almost general. This is not an extreme or unusual occurrence; it happens somewhere in almost every play. If the interest rises the audience listens.

Jews undoubtedly have a special talent for acting; at its best acting on the Yiddish stage reaches a very high level; at its worst it is usually better than bad acting elsewhere. Bertha Kalich

comes from the Yiddish theatre; the astonishing Vera Gordon was buried in a minor Yiddish playhouse on Grand Street. Jacob Adler is a fine actor and so is David Kessler sometimes. Boris Tomasheffsky has a certain talent for the projection of modern melodrama. There are newcomers. Cillie Adler, one of Jacob Adler's daughters, is an artist of temperament and astonishing finesse. I could describe her in terms of the Broadway stage as a sort of combination of Mizzi Hajos and Laurette Taylor. Her sister Frances, on the other hand, although remarkably beautiful, is deficient in talent. Ludwig Satz, still a very young man, is a fine " character " actor. If he continues to grow he will some day undoubtedly control a theatre of his own. He has made a deep impression in Ossip Dymow's *The Awakening of a Nation*, in Perez Hirschbein's *A Verworfen Winkel* and *The Blacksmith's Daughters*, and in David Pinski's play, *The Treasure*.

The actors on the Yiddish stage are well organized; they have their clubs and their unions and they see to it that the rules of these clubs and unions are enforced. Every Yiddish theatre, whether it produces musical plays or not, is obliged to engage an orchestra and a chorus!

The repertories in these theatres are much more

varied than those of the uptown playhouses. Modern melodramas like Schomer's *Today*, which Emily Stevens played in English, are popular. Gabel's Theatre on the Bowery exploits pieces with such titles as *A Girl's Good Name* and Mr. and Mrs. Tomasheffsky have no very high standard. Then there are Yiddish plays on the post-Goldfaden [1] model with " song and dance," and villains in silk hats and there are the plays of Jacob Gordin, who to be sure adapted many of them from dramas by Shakespeare, Goethe, Hebbel, Ibsen, Ostrovsky, Hugo, Lessing, Schiller, Hauptmann, Gogol, Grillparzer, and others. His *Mirele Effros*, for example, is a Jewish *King Lear*, while *God, Man and Devil* was inspired by *Faust*. The repertory is further increased by the inclusion of successful American plays and at most of the Yiddish theatres the best foreign dramas are occasionally presented, sometimes for runs. Tolstoy's *The Living Corpse* was first given in New York in Yiddish and I remember Jacob Adler's performance of Fédya as the best I have seen. I once saw a very good performance of Gorky's *The Lower Depths* at David Kessler's Theatre. Strange as it may seem this sordid tragedy, unredeemed by a

[1] Abraham Goldfaden founded the Yiddish Theatre in Rumania in 1876.

single ray of humour, was played for comedy on this occasion. Yiddish audiences love comedy; indeed they insist upon it. Guimerá's *Marta of the Lowlands*, Oscar Wilde's *Salome*, Schnitzler's *Doctor Bernhardi*, Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*, and many other plays of the foreign art theatre have been performed in Yiddish, some of them frequently. During the season of 1918–19 *Mrs. Warren's Profession* was given forty times at the Irving Place Theatre.

But the modern Jewish playwrights, aside from Ossip Dymow, have been given little encouragement in the Yiddish theatres; at least this was the case until Maurice Schwartz opened his Irving Place Theatre to some of them. Leon Kobrin, for instance, is forced to produce his plays in specially hired halls. The two greatest successes of the season of 1918–19 at the Irving Place Theatre were two pieces by Perez Hirschbein which have been begging for production for several years. One of the reasons managers gave for refusing to consider them was that they were written in three acts! Successful Yiddish plays had hitherto been written in four or more acts. David Pinski's very fine play, *The Treasure*, has also been produced at this theatre, although not for a run. Max Reinhardt produced this play in

Berlin as long ago as 1910. Reinhardt has encouraged other young Jewish playwrights, Sholom Ash among others, whose *The God of Vengeance* was performed in Berlin.

After seeing Perez Hirschbein's fine play, *The Blacksmith's Daughters*, I can testify to a great revival of interest on my part (I have been an occasional attendant of the Yiddish Theatre since 1900) in the Yiddish Theatre and a feeling that Isaac Goldberg's hope for its future is not altogether without promise of fulfilment. *The Blacksmith's Daughters* is a folk-play of Jewish Russia, as typical of the race and environment as Synge's *The Tinker's Wedding* is typically Irish. This kind of play, by reason of its simple human qualities, immediately assumes a universal aspect; it can be understood, indeed, by anybody.

I have said that *The Blacksmith's Daughters* is a simple play. The plot is so simple that it might almost be said not to exist. The joy of the piece lies in its refreshingly ecstatic realism, its delightful characterization, its human point of view, its charming episodes, its snatches of folk and religious song. "Many Yiddish plays," writes Dr. Goldberg, "to the Western mind, would seem to lack climax, whereas the truth

is that the Jewish reader or spectator regards the work as a picture, rather than a progress." A typical scene is that of the second act in which one of the daughters bewails her lot because the young man she fancies seemingly prefers her sister. Zelda has another lover and in a burst of sympathy and generosity she offers Leah a love potion which she has secured from a woman who puts it in her husband's soup once a week to hold him. Remember, O scoffing reader, that Madame de Montespan tried similar tricks on Louis XIV. This scene occurs early in the second act. At the end of this act the blacksmith and his strapping apprentices, the two lovers, come in for their dinner. There is washing of the hands, the laying of the table by the girls, the serving of the dinner, the cutting of bread, but not a word is spoken; the byplay furnishes the drama. At last the sorrowful Leah sees her chance; she clutches frantically at the love potion and drops it into the soup she is about to serve Boruch. But in her haste, her embarrassment, her nervousness, the plate slips from her fingers and smashes at her feet; love potion and soup together sink into the boards of the floor. The curtain falls. I have never seen a scene better

played; I have never seen a scene make more effect with an audience, and yet for the last fifteen minutes of this act not one word is spoken.

Yiddish actors nearly all have talent; many have genius. At their worst they caricature, exaggerate, overemphasize their points. At their best, and they are at their best naturally in such a play as *The Blacksmith's Daughters* rather than in a drama by Bernard Shaw or Ibsen, the acting rises to a high level. Ludwig Satz plays a small rôle in this play, that of a book peddler, but he plays it with unction and characterizes it with considerable imagination. As the idiot boy in *The Treasure* he is simply extraordinary. The burden of Hirschbein's play falls on Cillie Adler as the lucky sister and with what art and skill she develops the part! Her detail, her byplay, her verbal expression, all make her performance a very finished piece of work. Mr. Schwartz, himself, is successful as one of the blacksmith's apprentices, especially in his songs, and the others are entirely satisfactory. I particularly like Mr. Goldsmith as the blacksmith's father.

Certain American publishers [1] have made it pos-

[1] *The Treasure:* David Pinski (B. W. Huebsch); "Three Plays" (*Isaac Scheftel, The Last Jew,* and *The Dumb Messiah*): David Pinski (B. W. Huebsch); *The God of Ven-*

sible to study the plays of a group of modern Yiddish playwrights in English translations, and it is evident that these men are producing interesting work, which bears in a sense the same relation to the Yiddish Theatre that the work of Synge and his contemporaries bore to the Irish Theatre. At its best it is excellent folk-drama and the religion and customs of the Jew form an excellent basis for folk-drama. Hirschbein, to be sure, is occasionally influenced by the French symbolists; there seems to be a close affiliation between Dymow and the modern Russians;[1] still others have derived their form from Hauptmann and the modern Germans. This is not matter for censure, however, and at its best, as in Pinski's *The Treasure*, the work of the modern Jew in the theatre approaches perilously near to genius.

May 1, 1919.

geance: Sholom Ash (The Stratford Company); "Six Plays of the Yiddish Theatre": First series: plays by David Pinski, Sholom Aleichem, Sholom Ash, and Perez Hirschbein; Second series: plays by David Pinski, Z. Levin, Leon Kobrin, and Perez Hirschbein (John W. Luce and Co.).

[2] Dymow, indeed, usually writes in Russian.

V

The Spanish Theatre

IN at least one respect, and that in the matter of religion, Chicago may be regarded as a cosmopolitan city. Religions flourish in Chicago and round about that metropolis as field daisies flourish in Massachusetts. In no other city of the world, it would seem, is such anxiety manifested for the welfare of the soul. John Alexander Dowie founded the new Zion near Chicago, an extraordinary community, where a rude idealism battled nobly with crude materialistic conditions and superstition found favour in mediocre minds. The fat prophet hurled epithetical stink-pots at the heads of his adversaries and travelled abroad in a chariot borne forward by two startling mottled ponies. I am certain that the prophet sought zebras, which may not have been in the market; nor could zebras have withstood the rigours of the stiff Zion City climate, the windy terrors of its treeless barren plain. The palace of the prophet was of red brick (his followers contented themselves with the ugly clap-boarded dwellings of the environment and period) in the worst style of the

late nineties in the middle west, the rococo decadence following the President Grant epoch, late Cleveland or early McKinley. The roof, however, was shingled with a touch of fantasy, zigzagging slates in black and white. The interior, which I sometimes visited on some journalistic mission, could not be described as symbolic of the riches of the spirit. Nor was any ascetic note sounded. Thick red and green carpets were pleasant to walk upon but hideous to the eye. The elaborate furniture represented Grand Rapids taste at its worst and most expensive. Here the prophet's unkissed son grew up and the fat, the very fat prophet himself, ate from the fleshpots and contemplated his pseudo-divinity in the long mirrors.

In Chicago, too, flourished the Spirit-Fruit religion, which originated, to be sure, on a Michigan farm, but reached its true fruition in a minor lecture hall on South Clark Street. Free love in a rather terrifyingly absolute sense and the consecration of one of the highest ideals of Heliogabolus appeared to be the principal tenets of this decidedly pleasant form of worship, which continued to thrive until the star reporters of two Chicago newspapers made its existence in unsubtle Chicago a police problem. For side by side with the growth of religious feeling in Chicago there

stalked an organized persecution and faith was torn from the hearts of the people. Every day a new martyr to a new faith was burned at the stake beside the shores of Lake Michigan.

Who would look for Babism in Chicago? Yet Mirza Ali Mohammed has found many adherents there. Then there was a faith which made blue glass its idol. I do not recall the name of this sect but blue glass was prescribed for all mental and physical ills and the panes in many houses were changed. Naturally such tampering with God's conventions stirred the police department to action. I myself was present when the officers of the law shattered one of these glass houses, from the bed of a blue-lighted room of which an emaciated saint-like skeleton of a woman, who must have weighed forty pounds, was borne protesting and carried on a stretcher in a patrol-wagon to a hospital. Whether she died or not I do not remember. Probably nobody does. Public decency was satisfied, once she had been placed in a room with clear panes of glass.

There were other religions, many others, but of all the Chicago religions I remember best that of the Sun Worshippers. Its high priest, if I recall his name correctly, was a Persian, Ottoman Zar-

Adusht Hanish. His followers were asked to refrain from the eating of animals; nor could the skins of animals be used as shoe leather or belts; nor their fur worn as muffs or collars. All walked softly in canvas shoes. So far one might class Bernard Shaw with the Sun Worshippers. But these Chicagoans carried matters further. They used the sun for cooking purposes and any one familiar with the Chicago sun must be quite aware of the fact that it is as efficacious in this regard as a seven burner gas range. The Sun Worshippers also believed in periods of fasting and thirty and forty day fasts were undertaken, not, I can say from some personal observation of the participants, without beneficial results. . . . Altogether a sweet, mild-tempered sect, with no sort of militancy of manner or thought. I recall especially a charming English lady, who since she had joined the holy band had eaten no meat, replying to my question as to whether or not she missed it, "Not often, but sometimes I do have a longing for some nice potted shrimps!"

If I had remained in Chicago I should have become religious. I should have joined a sect or perhaps founded one. New York is less given to making a fetish of religion. Many sects un-

doubtedly have gained a foothold here but they are not advertised and persecuted; consequently they fade into the insignificant background of New York life. To restaurants and theatres are assigned the parts that religions play in Chicago. Of the latter there are so many that no complete list of them has as yet been compiled. Almost every language is represented by its drama in New York, unless it be a language which has no drama.

Strangely enough, however, the Spanish Theatre has never become an institution in New York like the theatre of the Chinese, the Jews, the Germans, the French, the Italians, and the Russians. Sporadic attempts have been made to found a Spanish Theatre but there is no playhouse regularly devoted to Iberian theatrical art. Now considering the large Spanish population, continually being increased by visitors from Cuba, Mexico, South and Central America, and Spain itself, considering the large number of Americans in New York who speak Spanish, this may be regarded as inexplicable. The Spaniards love the drama; they adore dancing. They have produced some very great dramatists from the time of Lope de Vega, Calderón, and Tirso de Molina, to José Echegaray, Angel Guimerá, Benito Pérez-Galdós,

Linares Rivas, Dicenta, Gregorio Martiñez-Sierra, Santiago Rusiñol, the brothers Quintero, and Jacinto Benavente. The zarzuela is a form of light opera invented by the Spanish and brought to a high degree of perfection. All the great dramatists of Spain have written zarzuelas which have been set to music by such composers as Bretón, Chapí, Albéniz, Valverde (father and son), Serrano, Vives, and Caballero. As for dancing it is the national art. Why then has not some Spaniard established a theatre here for the presentation of the best classic and modern plays with visiting stars, and occasionally great visiting dancers? Why have all the attempts at a Spanish theatre (with the brilliant exception of the production of *The Land of Joy*) been petty and primitive and on a level with performances seen in small Spanish villages? I cannot explain it but so the matter stands.[1]

[1] At the end of April, 1919, another attempt to present Spanish opera and zarzuela, on a somewhat pretentious scale but without adequate means, was made at the Park Theatre. The venture, foredoomed to failure from the beginning, lasted somewhat less than two weeks, but during that period two works of Amadeo Vives were sung, *Maruxa* and *Los Bohemios*. These were followed by a revue called *Cielo Español*. This entertainment unfortunately had no redeeming features, as all the entertainers, including the conductor of the orchestra, were wholly lacking in talent. A more recent experiment at the Cort Theatre was also abortive.

The Spanish Theatre

The latest attempt at a Spanish Theatre in New York is very modest. Manuel Noriega and his company have given some scattered performances at the Amsterdam Opera House on West Forty-fourth Street, just two blocks from the Hotel Astor. There on Sunday afternoons you may hear a short play, listen to some *canciones*, see some dancing, and finally enjoy a zarzuela, all for one price of admission. For the *lunetas* (stalls) seventy-five cents is asked, for the *palcos* (boxes) one dollar. There is but one *función* a week but the bill is changed every Sunday. On the occasion I attended the audience was made up entirely of Spaniards or Latin-Americans; I must have looked almost Scandinavian in comparison. There were children in plenty, fat dusky children, well-behaved and over-dressed. Smoking was permitted and nearly all the men smoked. During the intermissions attendants passed up and down the aisles with trays of beer, lemonade, and sandwiches. Cocktails and highballs were procurable but I did not see anybody drinking them.

The Amsterdam Opera House is really a dance hall, for although there is a stage, the floor of the auditorium is built without a rake. The stage, however, is high enough so that it is possible to see from practically every line of chairs. Midway

between floor and ceiling a row of boxes completely circles the hall from the proscenium arch on one side of the stage to that on the other. Under these boxes the wall is mirrored.

At three o'clock, the hour announced for beginning, the impatient ones began to stamp and call out. The performance, of course, did not begin until twenty minutes after three. I was surprised that it began so early. Is the Metropolitan Opera House the only theatre in the world where performances begin on time? I sometimes think so. . . . The first play, a melodramatic comedy in one act and three scenes called *Los Traperos de Madrid* (*The Ragpickers of Madrid*) was for all the world like an old-fashioned Bowery melodrama, without any of the saw-mill scenes, railway wrecks, or storms at sea which decorated the progress of those delightful entertainments. Otherwise Bertha, the sewing machine girl, or Nellie, the beautiful cloak model, had been metamorphosed into the rag-picker's daughter, Rosario, loving the poor hero and besought by the rich villain. After an expository incident, the usual "front" scene followed, a street, of course, and rather an astonishing street for Madrid, with advertisements of Spearmint gum in English on a wall and the spire of the First Congregational Church in the middle

distance. Therein was enacted the usual "comic relief," furnished in this instance by two drunks. Then the play swiftly strode on to its climax in the third scene in which Rosario's blonde sister, also loved by the villain, Alfonso el Serio, dispatched the wicked man and was led off to prison, leaving Rosario to marry the poor man she loved. The "much applauded author" of this piece, the program informed us, was Isidro Soler.

It is always my hope in such a theatre, a hope frequently encouraged by satisfactory experience, to meet with interesting acting, but in this instance I was disappointed. The acting was conventional and sometimes crude and amateurish. Arthur Symons declares that the Spaniards have very little talent for acting, lacking the necessary flexibility. The actors were especially continent in the use of gestures. George Henry Lewes long ago pointed out that "it is really curious that Southern nations, who habitually gesticulate vivaciously, are less given to gesticulation on the stage than we, who rarely, except on the stage, make use of our hands for expression." But there were touches to delight. For example, a subsidiary character, Pilar, played by the Señorita Ruiz, wore a rose Manila shawl in the authentic Spanish manner; it was a pleasure to watch her

manage it, cuddle it into life, fold it now about her, flaunt it now in the air. The women were all pretty and very much alive and, of course, there were touches of vermillion and coral and emerald green and turquoise blue in the costumes and combs in the hair . . . diamond combs.

The play over, after a long intermission during which refreshments were passed, the variety part of the entertainment began. The Señorita Lahoz sang a tuneful ditty called *Carolina* and sang it sufficiently badly, but she was recalled and a bouquet was thrown to her from one of the boxes, after which she was permitted to retire. Then the Señorita Iris sang *Mala Entraña* and the young man back of me knew it well enough to sing it with her. The songs out of the way, the "*gran baile Español*" began. The first of the dancers to be announced was the "*siempre aplaudida*" Enriqueta Bonilla. The pianist struck up a gay dance measure, in 3–4 time, of course, and the Bonilla appeared. She proved to be somewhat massive but handsome after the manner of massive ladies. In spite of her size and her age she undoubtedly knew how to dance and with the Spanish that is the matter of importance. Besides plumpness is almost a requisite of success on the Spanish stage. The technique of her arms, legs, and cas-

tanets was up to a measurable standard. Indeed, with her hands, wrists, and fingers she did some beautiful things. And she was certainly much applauded. On her return an incident characteristic of the unselfconscious and somewhat careless attitude of a Spanish performer before the public occurred. The pianist began to play a new tune, whereupon the Bonilla, stamping her tiny feet and crying, "No! No!" retreated sulking to a corner. He repeated the first dance and she entered into it all smiles and coquetries. This time she called, "Ole!" in a deep resonant voice and the audience joined in. Next, assisted by two young girls, she danced to new measures. It was curious to see how, although they were all following the same general scheme of steps and gestures, the three seemed entirely independent of one another, the arm and leg raising, the stamping, etc., were simultaneous but all pointed to different degrees, all set in different lines. . . . At last the Bonilla retired and two very young and pretty ladies in orange and gilt skirts, the Señoritas Lahoz and Martinez, entered to dance the *Jota Aragonesa*. The pianist played the familiar folk-dance and the ladies advanced and retreated, clattered their castanets, threw their legs about, and "grew mad with their bodies." Bonilla from the wings shouted encour-

agement and loudly clicked her own castanets. The audience shouted too. One young man was even moved to throw his neighbour's hat on the stage but was prevented. The dance over, the ladies were called back and it was repeated. This time I stood at the back of the hall and watched the dancers reflected in patterns in the mirrors at the sides of the auditorium under the boxes, a very wonderful effect which can be observed in few theatres. For shadows or reflections will make something interesting even of something stupid. . . . As the hour was late I did not remain for *Los Tres Gorriones* (*The three sparrows*) by Miguel Echegaray (who, I was disappointed to observe, was not "*aplaudido*"), the music by Torregrosa, But I shall go again.

March 12, 1919.